

**THE INDIAN
NATIONAL MOVEMENT
AND
AMERICAN OPINION**

HARNAM SINGH

Price Rs. Twenty Only

D203

100-100-100
CANCELLED
by
The National Library



THE INDIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT AND AMERICAN OPINION

HARNAM SINGH,

Professor and Head of the Department of Political Science
UNIVERSITY OF DELHI.

Introduction by

QUINCY WRIGHT

Professor Emeritus

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Published by

RAMA KRISHNA & SONS,

BOOK SELLERS,

16/B, Connaught Place, NEW DELHI-1.

© Copyright with the Author

FIRST EDITION 1962

RE-PRINT 1964

929 06


11470303

11.4.64

Price : Rupees Twenty only

Printed by S. P. Dhawan, at The Central Electric Press,
80-D, Kamla Nagar, Delhi-6.

To
Mrs. G. J. Watumull
and
the Late Mr. Watumull



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2019 with funding from
Public.Resource.Org

Preface

The position of the United States of America as a major world power and the emergence of India as a Sovereign Independent State on August 15, 1947, are among others, the two most notable features of the post-war period. The fact that these two nations are destined to play important roles for world peace and prosperity cannot be over-emphasized. Therefore, a study of the American opinion in relation to Indian government and politics between the years 1919 and 1947—a period of strife and struggle for India and a period marked by the growing sympathy of the American people for the cause of India's freedom—will be useful, not only as an historical study, but, I believe, as a contribution towards greater understanding between these two great countries.

In writing this work, the sources of material were mostly the journals, periodicals and newspapers published in the United States of America during those years. With respect to journals and periodicals, I have made use of all those which published anything pertaining to Indian government and politics. With respect to the daily press, I have chosen fourteen leading newspapers¹ representing varied interests and opinions from all parts of the country, thus giving a cross-section of American

1. The *New York Times*, the *Springfield Republican*, the *Baltimore Sun*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat*, the *New York Herald Tribune*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Atlanta Constitution*, the *Richmond Times Dispatch*, the *Kansas City Star*, the *Chicago Daily Worker*.

opinion. It will be observed that in the absence of any direct news service from India, the British press influenced American opinion to a considerable degree. Hence, on important matters, the views of the British press are also noted in order to evaluate American opinion—particularly the writings of eminent Englishmen who were well-known in America, and editorials from periodicals which were widely read in the country.

It is obvious that an appreciation of the comments of the press or of individual writers on any aspect of the Indian administration and politics necessitates a study of the problem itself. Hence, an effort has been made throughout to describe, as briefly as possible, the events commented upon, in a manner which gives continuity to the narration of the political movement during that period.

I owe a great debt of gratitude to Mrs. G. J. Watumull and the late Mr. Watumull, and to the Watumull Foundation, for the Fellowship which enabled me to go to the United States. The kind interest of the late Dr. Taraknath and Mrs. Das helped and encouraged me. It was my good fortune to be able to work under such an eminent scholar as Dr. Charles C. Tansill, whose profound knowledge of American history and whose illuminating lectures were a source of inspiration to me. I am grateful to Father Gerard F. Yates, Dean of the Graduate School, Georgetown University, for many kindnesses and courtesies. I also acknowledge with thanks the cooperation and assistance so courteously given by the staff of the Library of Congress. I am grateful indeed to Professor Quincy Wright who very kindly wrote the introduction for this book.

I also wish to express my thanks to Mr. S. Das who, with meticulous care, went through the manuscript and gave valuable suggestions, and to Mr. S. P. Dhawan of the Central Electric Press for the interest he took in the printing of the book.

Finally, to my wife I am indebted far more than words can say ; she has helped and encouraged me from the very beginning.

*University of Delhi,
April, 1962,*

HARNAM SINGH

Contents

Preface	v
Introduction	ix
1. Indian Government and Politics Prior to 1919	... 1
2. The Scheme of Constitutional Reforms	... 27
3. Repression in India	... 58
4. Reforms and Unrest	... 98
5. Gandhi and Non-Cooperation	... 151
6. The Simon Commission and the First Round Table Conference	... 207
7. The Civil Disobedience Movement	... 269
8. The Second Round Table Conference and After	... 331
9. Resume of U.S. Public Opinion	... 355
10. Roosevelt's Role in India's Liberation	... 367
Bibliography	... 389
Index	... 396

Introduction

President Lincoln once said : "He who molds public sentiment, goes deeper than he who enacts statutes or pronounces decisions. He makes statutes and decisions possible or impossible to execute." Not only politicians, propagandists and advertisers, but also political scientists and sociologists have generally accepted this judgment. Practical operators have tried to devise symbols, slogans, arguments, and sub-conscious associations appealing to desires, fears, reasons, interests and values in order to attract the allegiance, beliefs, votes, purchases, cooperation, or militant action of members of the public. Social scientists have appreciated the influence of public opinion on all phases of politics, administration, economy, group solidarity, national interest, and even ethical and religious belief. Journals devoted to the history and analyses of public opinion have appeared ; and scientific polls of the public and analyses of the press have been conducted in all countries to measure the fluctuations in attitudes and opinions. These fluctuations in a particular public, in respect to particular persons, nations, symbols, concepts, values, policies, decisions, movements and other psychological objects have been plotted in the various dimensions of opinion—direction, intensity, homogeneity, and continuity.

The history of politics and, indeed, of civilization can be interpreted in terms of the changes in opinion. When historians differentiate periods of imperialism, nationalism, internationalism and cosmopolitanism, they usually refer to the domination of

different images in the public mind. When they refer to movements of socialism, individualism, communism, capitalism, militarism, pacifism, etc., they usually refer to the opinion of an active portion of the public. While such terms may designate observable social, economic and political practices and institutions, they usually refer to opinions of a group which may or may not be reflected in such practices and institutions. Wars are fought about divergent opinions; international relations is, in reality, less concerned with relations of nations, than with the relation of the opinions of nations about each other, opinions which may or may not be closely related to the "facts" as disclosed by scientific observation of practices and institutions. Public opinion and its fluctuations are indeed the "facts" of major significance in the study of most political problems.

During the "Cold War" which emerged after World War II, the opinion of its two major protagonists—the United States and the Soviet Union—about each other has doubtless been of first importance for the future of mankind, but second in importance has probably been the opinion of the most powerful and the most numerous people of the non-communist world—the United States and India—about each other.

Changes in opinion usually lag behind changes in conditions. Much opinion, adapted to the horse and buggy period, continues in the atomic age. Consequently, to understand the post-war opinions of contemporary peoples, it is necessary to study their opinions during the inter-war period or even earlier.

Dr. Harnam Singh has made an important contribution to this understanding. He presents a detailed study of American opinion about India during the inter-war period based on an analysis of a dozen important newspapers from all sections of the United States and representing various political affiliations, supplemented by articles from several journals and reviews. After a brief discussion of American opinion about India before 1919, he discusses the focus and significance of American opinion in each of the six stages into which he divides Indian political

history during the inter-war period. For each stage, he presents a brief account of the development of Indian politics and the nationalist movement to indicate the extent to which American opinion was, or generally was not, based upon adequate information.

The inadequacies of that information were striking. American knowledge of India before World War I was derived mainly from the reports of American missionaries with special interest, from superficial narratives of occasional tourists, from few widely read but highly imaginative literary productions such as the works of Rudyard Kipling, from stereotypes carried on from the early nineteenth century clipper-ship period when American trade with India was important, from exaggerated representations of Indian Durbars and Maharajahs in travelling circus parades, and from reports of the British Government and Press with a point of view different from that of the Indian people. It is not, therefore, surprising that American opinion about India only gradually acquired a close relation to the facts of the Indian scene.

From the first, American opinion "was generally sympathetic to India's aspirations" because of the parallelism between the American and Indian struggles for Independence, and was somewhat suspicious of the views presented from British sources, upon which, however, the American Press had largely to rely. Although the personality of Mahatma Gandhi and the non-cooperation movement, and reforms initiated by the British were discussed, they were not adequately appraised. Serious incidents such as the Amritsar massacre were often unknown to the American Press until long after they occurred. The attention given to India was meager during the 1920's. It was not until the 1930's that any American newspaper thought it worth while to maintain a regular correspondent in India. During that decade American interest increased. Gandhi's salt march to the sea, his imprisonment and release in 1930, made headlines in the American Press.

In spite of the predominant sympathy for Indian national aspirations, the American Press also included a pro-British

element, while some papers tried to maintain a neutral attitude, in the struggle for Indian independence. British propaganda in the United States increased in the 1930's; Katherine Mayo's "Mother India" was said to be the most effective propaganda and was bitterly resented in India. Nevertheless, American opinion increasingly championed the case of Indian nationalism. During the Second World War, though an ally of Britain, this sympathy continued.

Dr. Singh traces the course of American opinion, the issues that attracted American comment, and the factors influencing the direction and intensity of opinion, the extent to which more abundant and accurate information was provided to the American public, and the increasing realization by American opinion of the importance of India and of its relations to the United States on the course of world politics. The study is a valuable contribution, not only to its specific subject, but also to the general understanding of public opinion, of its role in international politics of Indian-British relations during the Gandhian period, and of the background of recent Indian-American relations.

QUINCY WRIGHT

Indian Government and Politics Prior to 1919

The lure of the fabulous wealth of India led to the discovery of America at the close of the fifteenth century. Credit for finding a route to India goes to Vasco da Gama, however, who first landed at Surat in 1498 with a modest fleet of seven small ships after a rough and arduous voyage around the Cape of Good Hope. For a century the Portuguese held sway over trade with the East; later, other rivals, including Britain, appeared on the scene. On the last day of the year 1600, Queen Elizabeth I granted a charter to a group of English merchants to trade in the Orient. In 1607, another group of Englishmen formed a trading post at Jamestown in Virginia, a region named after the same Queen. Thus the English traders of the East India Company reached India at practically the same time as their fellow traders crossed the Atlantic as a part of the same great commercial movement which grew out of the naval activities of Sir Francis Drake, Sir John Hawkins and others. From these two humble beginnings, there grew on the one hand the British Indian Empire with an area of 1,800,000 square miles, and on the other the United States of America with an area of 3,600,000 square miles. Needless to say, neither group of traders had the remotest idea that any such results would follow.

These two groups of English traders who encircled the world by sailing east and west did, for one hundred and fifty years,

little more in either region than establish trading centres on the coasts. Then, in 1740, Frederick the Great turned the "Pragmatic Sanctions" into scrap paper and seized territories belonging to the Austrian Princess Maria Theresa. This act enkindled a war in Europe in which France and England took opposite sides. As a result, England and France, who also had her trading centres in India and America, were at war not only in Europe but in America, Africa and Asia, and George Washington in Pennsylvania and Clive in India were colleagues and fellow-officers fighting together in the British armies. This war made England predominant over France in North America and in India.

India was first known to America through the missionaries. In their zeal to convert the heathens to the Christian way of life, American missionaries went forth to distant parts of the world. However, the first missionaries to visit India were from Europe. The missionary enterprise followed in the wake of commercial and military expansion of the western nations. Thus :

The Catholic missionary orders of the sixteenth century accompanied the explorer-conqueror or preceded him. The Protestant missionary of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries followed in the wake of trade.¹

To the minds of the people of the East, it seemed that Europe wanted not only to deprive them of their material goods but even of their religion. Easy conquest of the land put a premium on their civilization and culture. Barring a few scholars who had delved deep into ancient Indian thought and literature, the average man in the western world knew little about the people. Americans knew even less, for living in a vast country rich in natural resources and sparsely populated, they had no need to look outside their own land. They had vast scope for develop-

1. W. E. Hockings, *Rethinking Missions*, quoted from Gandhi's "Challenge to Christianity" (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1939), p. 55.

ment, and all through the nineteenth century they were fully occupied with their own internal problems and the problems relating to adjacent countries. The policy of Isolation was the offshoot of their desire to be let alone; the Monroe Doctrine, enunciated as early as 1823, was a reflection of the same desire. Therefore, contact between India and America was slight, and whatever did exist was through the American missionaries. Distorted and sometimes malicious views were told by the British to the American public, although the resulting impressions were dispelled many a time by conscientious American missionaries. F. de W. Ward, an American missionary in South India, wrote, as early as 1850 :

Those of my readers who have been accustomed to regard the Hindus as a semi-barbarous, illiterate people, will have read with some surprise the statements and extracts of the preceding chapter.² Were more needful to correct this erroneous impression, the necessity would be fully supplied by an illustration of the past and present character of science in that land.³

Even as late as the close of the second decade of the present century, opinion from responsible quarters would be expressed to extol the West at the expense of the East. In 1919, the *London Daily Telegraph* wrote: "There is no civilization known to the world except that of Christianity."⁴ That was indeed a bold statement to be made so late in the day, and it only served to indicate the ignorance of the people of England about the East. If such statements could be digested by the British who, as rulers of India, were expected to have at least some knowledge of their subjects for whose welfare they claimed to carry a heavy burden, it would not be difficult to understand if the American public displayed greater ignorance. Besides, it is

2. He writes about the ancient art and literature.

3. F. de W. Ward, *India and the Hindoos* (New York : Baker and Scribner, 1850), p. 180.

4. *London Daily Telegraph*, November 7, 1919.

always the tendency for people to concentrate their attention on domestic problems—problems which concern their daily lives. The chief concern of the individual, or of a group of individuals, lies in the immediate neighbourhood—the state, territory or province in which he lives—the particular needs of the region wherein his interests lie. They have for him an importance which is natural. The farther the region from the immediate interest of the people, the less attention they are likely to give it. The Oriental countries were of less concern to the American public than were Mexico and Latin America with whom they had much closer ties. But in the modern world, due to the rapid means of communication and other technological developments which have brought the distant parts of the globe closer together, the interest of America in far-flung regions has much grown. People want to know and are in a position to know about distant lands and their problems.

When, after the Spanish-American War of 1898-99, America emerged as a world power, her interests spread for the first time beyond her own borders to other lands and notably to Great Britain. The newly-awakened interest of America in the affairs of Britain and thus, indirectly, of India, was not an attempt on the part of Americans to patronize their British cousins ; it was the direct result of the emergence of Uncle Sam as a world power at the beginning of the present century. The colossal wealth and the new territorial responsibilities of America led to an enforced and vital interest in the policies, affairs, failures and successes of the British Empire. America could not avoid her concern in the affairs of the Empire. It was no mere idle curiosity or impertinent criticism, but an honest effort to study and understand the internal and external conditions of the British Empire from the American point of view—if for no other reason, at least for her own benefit. What if Great Britain should lose India, lose the Suez Canal, lose her supremacy of the sea ? Would it not have world-wide repercussions in the field of power politics, and would it not necessitate a re-alignment of world forces ? These thoughts came to the American mind, for America could not reman

oblivious to the demands of the modern world where each nation was dependent upon the others. Any important event taking place in one corner of the globe had its repercussions in the others. An indifference of the Lords of the Clouds, since the harvest in the greater part of India depends on the rainfall, would affect not only India and her people, but countless others in distant lands.

Now, however, rapid means of communication have brought the far-flung parts of the globe much closer together, and in spite of bickerings and differences, political in nature, there exists today a greater sense of dependence of one country on another than was the case a few centuries ago. No nation, nowadays, can afford to live in isolation, and the old concept of self-sufficiency is a thing of the distant past. Even the idea of *laissez-faire* is impracticable in the present-day world. These are the days of reciprocal trade; each country deals in the world market where she can buy at a price lower than that at which she can produce herself. With this changed aspect, it is not difficult to visualize the growing interest of America not only in the affairs of the British Empire but in those of other parts of the world as well.

Most of the American authors who wrote about India prior to 1919 were either missionaries or tourists. Hardly any depicted India correctly, and very few made any reference, except a passing one, to the government and politics of the country. The reason for the neglect of this important aspect of their study is obvious. The missionaries saw India from their own limited point of view, their only concern being to save the souls of the heathens. The casual travellers were more pedantic in their efforts. They strove hard to give an impression of deep insight into the life of the country and of being fully conversant with the wisdom of the "mysterious East". It gave them a sense of importance in the eyes of their fellow Americans. Besides, a journalistic "scoop" about spiritual India was handsomely rewarded in the material media of exchange that brought solid American comforts. A hurried look at the country by some was considered an advantage. In

the introductory remarks of his book *The West in the East, From an American Point of View*, Mr. Price Collier observes :

Much ridicule is dealt out to the author who writes of a people and a country which he has visited only for a short time. On the other hand, it is the universal and sound opinion that the history of an individual, or of a nation, can only be written impartially by one who stands apart and at a distance, and whose impressions and opinions are not smothered by details and prejudices.⁵

It may be sound principle that the history of a nation can be written impartially, if at all, only by one "who stands apart and at a distance," but it takes a certain length of time to know what one is writing about. To write, after a short visit, about a people whose history goes back into the dim past, and to write with a sense of authority about their problems, is a venture which no one with a correct sense of proportion would endeavour to undertake. It requires a prolonged stay in India to understand her and to write about her. Eleanor Franklin Egan was not as optimistic as Mr. Collier, when she wrote :

There is no other country on earth in which the inquiring stranger encounters such a multitudinous variety of bewilderments as in India. Having consumed a fair-sized library on the subject ; having wandered, somewhat thoughtfully, all up and down the main avenues of life in the vast and mysterious empire ; and having talked with numerous interested and disinterested citizens both British and Indian, I have about reached the conclusion that nobody understands India, or ever can.⁶

5. Price Collier, *The West in the East, From an American Point of View* (New York : Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), introduction, p. 5.

6. Eleanor Franklin Egan, "All Is Confusion," *The Saturday Evening Post*, CXCVI (October 6, 1923), 26.

The majority of such writers visited the big cities and stayed in high-class hotels which offered a near replica of the western way of life. Their contact with the people of the country was mostly confined to those of the upper class whom they met in the gay atmosphere of the local clubs, or to high Government officials. They drew upon these sources, which were anything but representative, for their material. Commenting on the immensity of the problem, *The Christian Science Monitor* remarked in an editorial :

The question of India and her problems is one full of pitfalls. Few hills look greener at a distance than the political hills of India, and every year that passes, for one who makes a more intimate exploration before he writes his "book on India," there are twenty who write, at once, from the more distant view. These latter visit the large cities, mix with the educated Indians, gain impressions from superficial views, find them confirmed by similar people in similar districts wherever they go, and, in the end, quite satisfied that they have seen enough to justify them in the assumption that they have seen the whole, they take ship home again, and supplied with copious notes, write their book en voyage.⁷

Prior to 1919, the interest of the American public, whatever it was, was confined mostly to the people of India and their strange social customs. Interest in the government and politics of the country in some consistent form started only after World War I when Gandhi became a world figure by assuming leadership of India's political movement.

An intelligent study of American public opinion about Indian government and politics in the period between the two world wars necessitates a brief study of the growth of nationalism prior to 1919 and the various political currents running in the country.

7. *The Christian Science Monitor*, October 23, 1920, p. 14.

The British came to India at the most opportune time, when the Mogul Empire was tottering. They entered into a sort of political vacuum and thus easily became masters of the whole subcontinent. Some English blood was spilt in the process, but the sacrifices made by the early adventurers were not in vain. England became the world's greatest and richest country—a position which she occupied all through the nineteenth century. India had to pay the price for England's greatness, and by systematic and organized methods of exploitation was impoverished to the core.

The young Indians, especially those who went abroad for education (they went mostly to England), came in contact with the currents of modern European thought. They developed a critical attitude towards traditionalism and established social institutions ; they felt that India must learn modern modes of thought and adopt modern ways of living if she was to occupy a place of honour and dignity in the civilized world. This critical attitude led educated Indians to scrutinize the workings of the Government of their own country. Finding little scope for participation in the management of their country's affairs, these young nationalists became more critical of the Government, and this criticism was carried on through the Press, at meetings and by various associations. Political currents were running strong, especially in the big cities like Calcutta, Madras and Bombay, but the movement was not organized. In 1885, the aroused, though disorganized political sentiments of the people found expression in the formation of the Indian National Congress which had its first session in Bombay. Strange as it may sound, the organization which had been fighting the British in India for about half a century and which now guides the destinies of an independent India, was first formed by an Englishman named Allen Octavian Hume.

The Indian National Congress was started with the idea of giving vocal expression to the grievances of the educated Indians. For about two decades its sessions were like social gatherings where delegates from different parts of the country met during the Christmas week. In the beginning it did not find disfavour

with the Government ; as a matter of fact, some officials actually did attend its sessions. It was when its leadership was assumed by Mahatma Gandhi, after the first World War, that it acquired its present political character.

The achievements of the Indian National Congress during the first two decades of its existence were disappointing. It met every year, resolved, demonstrated and was forgotten for the rest of the year. The left wing in the organization grew impatient and began to challenge the authority of the older leaders. They believed that vociferous protests, deputations to London and the annual declaration of needs and grievances would never compel the bureaucracy to listen. A radical change in the operation of the organization was required to gather behind it such a force of public opinion as would make the organization a political power in the country. The younger element wanted something more strenuous and thorough ; they wanted something challenging that would stir the heart of the country. Something to stir their hearts did appear in the form of the partition of the Province of Bengal in 1905. Indian Nationalism assumed, from that time, a vigorous form. The young Indian was thrilled at the victory of Japan over Russia in the Russo-Japanese War of 1905. The defeat of a white race by a coloured race was a source of great inspiration. The suppressed streams of nationalism began to run freely, and in 1908 the first act of terrorism was noticed.

The years previous to the World War of 1914 witnessed a feeling of ill-will on the part of the Indians toward the British, but there was no marked agitation or any mass movement (a characteristic feature of the post-war period). Mr. Nehru wrote :

Towards the end of 1912, India was politically very dull. Tilak⁸ was in jail, the extremists had been set upon and were lying low without any effective leadership, Bengal was quiet after the unsettling of the

8. Great Indian Nationalist leader who dominated the political life of India before the advent of Gandhi.

partition of the province, and the Moderates had been effectively rallied to the Morley-Minto scheme of council.⁹

A general resentment by both Hindu and Moslem was discernible. The Reforms of 1909¹⁰ were clearly unlikely to satisfy the Extremists' demand for self-government, and in fact went but a small way to conciliate the Moderates.

The increasing realization of the humble status of their brothers in other parts of the Empire also strongly moved the Indians. The growth of anti-Indian feeling was manifested in South Africa with great vehemence. Indian labourers who were encouraged to go to South Africa to develop the colony, began to be subjected to highly restrictive measures when their usefulness was no longer felt. The Transvaal Government, by an Act of 1907, virtually excluded further immigration. Natal also was systematically endeavouring to restrict the possibilities of Indians earning a living after the expiry of their period of indentured service, and was treating similarly those Indians born in Natal.¹¹ The Government of India protested, but to no avail. A passive resistance movement in Natal was inspired by Mahatma Gandhi and this technique was effectively used by him in India's political struggle after the war.

The political agitation carried on by the Indians at the beginning of the present century resulted in the grant of the scheme of reforms by the British Government known as the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909. The Morley-Minto Council inaugurated by the 1909 Reforms was in no sense a representative body and failed to satisfy the aspirations of the people. The franchise was restricted and the system of election was

9. Jawaharlal Nehru, *Towards Freedom* (New York : The John Day Co., 1942), p. 39.

10. See p. 11.

11. A. B. Keith, *A Constitutional History of India, 1600-1935* (London: Methuen and Co., 1936), p. 238.

indirect. In the words of G.N. Singh :

As a matter of fact, the system of general representation was so narrow and indirect—it has been called doubly indirect by the authors of the Montford Report—that it could afford no political education to the people or give them any training in creating a sense of responsibility. To mention a concrete instance :—the average number of voters in the general constituencies for the Imperial Legislative Council was only 21, while in one case the actual number was 9.¹²

The Reforms of 1909 were, as a matter of fact, a farce. Mr. S. K. Ratcliffe was of the opinion that they

did not, in fact, carry India a yard in the direction of responsible Government, while they provided no fresh opportunities for executive experience—except in the case of a half-dozen or so prominent Indians appointed to the executive councils of the Viceroy and the Provincial Governors.¹³

The Council was dominated by the official bloc which gave an unreal character to the proceedings. The unofficial members were always in the opposition and in the minority; therefore, the decisions of the House were often known before hand, with the result that the debates lacked enthusiasm except when feelings were aroused.

At the time when war clouds were gathering over the European horizon, the situation in India was critical. But with the first thunder, the leaders were possessed with imperial patriotism; they closed the chapter of discord in Indo-British annals and began a new chapter of harmony in spite of the

12. G. N. Singh, *Landmarks in Indian Constitutional and National Development* (Benares City : The Indian Bookshop, 1933), p. 526.

13. S. K. Ratcliffe, "A Communication, England and India," *The New Republic*, XVI (August 17, 1918), 78.

fact that the educated Indians had ample grounds to aggrieved. They were incensed by the status they occupied in the administration of the domestic affairs of their own country. Certain measures applied by the Union Government to Indian settlers in South Africa, as already mentioned, had heated Indian tempers. The treatment accorded to Indians settled in Canada also aroused resentment in India.

But when the Indians found Great Britain embroiled in a war with Germany (for which the latter had gone to great pains to prepare herself in order to strike a swift and sure blow), they did not lose a moment in sinking their differences with the Government and offering to do anything in their power to assist the British to prosecute the war. They abstained from making capital out of Britain's delicate position. Even Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the great Indian nationalist leader who had just been released from prison after serving his full sentence of six years for sedition, exhorted his countrymen to strengthen the British hand. India gave her whole-hearted support to the British in war, and stood shoulder to shoulder with other parts of the Empire. The Indian National Congress cooperated with the Government and did not want to take advantage of the situation in pressing for reforms. Sir S. P. Sinha, President-elect of the Indian National Congress in 1915, in his presidential address¹⁴ remarked :

Doubts have been expressed in some quarters as to the wisdom of the Congress assembling while war is still going on. It has been suggested that discussions of political problems might be misconstrued as an attempt to advance individual national interests at a time of Imperial stress.....We want to make it perfectly clear that there is no one among us willing to cause the slightest embarrassment to the Government.

14. Sir S. P. Sinha's presidential address was considered to be most reactionary from the nationalist point of view. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *The History of the Indian National Congress* (Bombay : Padma Publications Ltd., 1946), p. 122.

We seek to make no political capital out of the service so ungrudgingly rendered by our countrymen to the Empire.¹⁵

The Indians and not the Government, which was neither of the people nor by the people, took the initiative in supplying men and money for the war. People of all races and religions, in all walks of life, volunteered to fight. Indian members of the Imperial Legislative Council asked that India be permitted to share with Britain the financial burden of the war which was not theirs. Had the initiative not been taken by the Indians themselves, any contribution made by the Government of India, which was not put into power by the Indians and was not even Indian in personnel, to crush the power that threatened the supremacy of the nation that ruled India, would have looked like an exaction and would have had an adverse moral effect. With the leaders behind them, however, the Government could send many more soldiers than would have been possible otherwise.

If the British Government had shown imagination in sowing and protecting against unfavourable winds the seed of self-government, and had stimulated its growth judiciously, the post-war disturbances in India, of which the world heard so much and which entailed such great loss of life and property, would not have occurred, and the subsequent constitutional development of India within the British Empire would have progressed harmoniously. The Allies had declared that the war was being waged to uphold the principles of national rights and self determination, but unfortunately individuals whose vested interests were threatened by any political progress in India, leagued together to prevent her from reaping the fruits of the victory to which she had contributed so much. Even during the most critical period of the war, a vigorous campaign was carried on to belittle and abuse the educated Indians. It was asserted that the Indians who fought and the Indians who

15. Sir S. P. Sinha, *Future of India* (London : J. Truscott and Sons, 1916), p. 4.

agitated had nothing in common and that if the agitators kept quiet it was merely because they knew that any movement they might start would have no chance of success. Thus the noble gesture made by India was not only not appreciated but was interpreted as a cloak to cover the helplessness of the leaders of the country. It was solemnly told to the British Government that if they transferred even one iota of power to the educated Indians, they—as guardians of the Indian masses—would betray the trust which those masses had placed in them.

The Congress wanted reforms—not as a reward for the Indians' loyalty, but as their inherent right. It did not seek a sudden and violent breakage in the evolution of political institutions in India; rather it wanted, without any radical departure from the line of constitutional progress, a substantial advance towards the development of free institutions in the country. The British Government had made no declaration of their aims and policy, and public opinion in India was anxious that they should give some expression in that direction. It was felt that any declaration of the British Government in consonance with the aspirations of the Indian people (that is, the implementation of self-governing institutions) would touch their hearts and appeal to their imaginations far more than would any specific political reforms, for the latter might fall short of expectations and cause general disappointment. An authoritative declaration, on the other hand, would carry conviction to the minds of the people that the pace of administrative reforms would be reasonably accelerated and that henceforth it would be only a question of patient preparation. Sir S. P. Sinha gave expression to this view in his presidential address, when he declared :

Let me not say that all that is wanted, all that would satisfy us, is a mere declaration of the policy; what I do say is that there should be a frank and full statement of the policy of the Government as regards the future of India, so that hope may come where doubt spreads its darkening shadow and that steps should be

taken to move toward self-government by the gradual development of popular control over all departments of Government and by the removal of disabilities and restrictions under which we labour both in our country and in other parts of the Empire.¹⁶

On the very eve of the declaration of war, a deputation¹⁷ of the Congress happened to be in London in connection with the proposed reforms of the Indian Council. This fact assumed great public importance for, as soon as war was declared, the deputation addressed a letter to the Secretary of State for India for submission to the King. Amongst other things, the letter said :

We have not the slightest doubt that as on previous occasions when the British forces were engaged in defending the interests of the Empire, so on the present, the Princes and people of India will readily and willingly cooperate to the best of their ability and afford opportunities of securing that end by placing the resources of their country at His Majesty's disposal. We want it to be clearly understood that, whatever differences in questions affecting the internal administration of our country might exist in peaceful times, the devotion of the people of India to the British throne in the face of an external foe is bound to ensure such feelings of harmony and internal peace that they can have no other thought than that of being united with the British nation in the whole-hearted endeavour to secure a speedy victory for the Empire.¹⁸

Mahatma Gandhi, who arrived in London from South Africa just on the eve of the declaration of war, declared his

16. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

17. Mr. M. A. Jinnah, leader of the Muslim League and head of the Pakistan Government, was a member of the deputation.

18. C. F. Andrews and Girja Mukerji, *The Rise and Growth of the Congress* (London : George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1938), p. 241.

intention of offering to take active service during the war. In a letter to the Under-Secretary of State for India, he wrote :

It was thought desirable by many of us that during the crisis that has overtaken the Empire and whilst many Englishmen, leaving their ordinary vocation in life, are responding to the Imperial call, those Indians who are residing in the United Kingdom and who can at all do so, should place themselves unconditionally at the disposal of the authorities..... We would respectfully emphasize the fact that the one dominant idea guiding us is that of rendering such humble assistance as we may be considered capable of performing, as an earnest of our desire to share the responsibilities of membership of this great Empire if we would share its privileges.¹⁹

As the war dragged on, however, the enthusiasm of the people lessened. There were fewer outbursts of devotion to the Empire. The attitude of the British also changed. Ramsay MacDonald was led to remark :

Indian enthusiasm was not encouraged ; her recruits were not accepted ; her ambulance corps were abandoned ; the administration became timorous at the spectre of an aggressive nationalism. The lips spoke good things, the eyes glanced suspiciously at the audience. There was a reaction towards the old views that the East was destined to be governed and yield huge profits to Western capital.²⁰

The prolongation of the war brought home to the Indians the importance of their country to the British Empire. Hard-headed, practical men protested against loyalty to the Empire, and the Government used stern measures against them.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 242.

20. J. Ramsay MacDonald, *The Government of India* (London : The Swarthmore Press Ltd., 1919), p. 265.

Discontent among the people began when the Government started prosecuting people on the slightest suspicion. Many prominent Indians were interned under the Defence of India Act. The tone of Congress also changed, when in its session of 1915 it adopted a resolution affirming that the time had arrived to introduce substantial measures of reform towards the attainment of self-government. Mr. Nehru summed up the situation thus :

The World War absorbed our attention. It was far off and did not at first affect our lives much, and India never felt the full horror of it. Politics petered out and sank into insignificance. The Defence of India Act (the equivalent of the British Defence of Realm Act) held the country in its grip. From the second year onwards, news of conspiracies and shootings came to us and press-gang methods to enroll recruits in the Punjab.....There was little sympathy with the British in spite of loud professions of loyalty. Moderate and Extremist alike learned with satisfaction of German victories. There was no love for Germany, of course, only the desire to see our own ruler humbled. It was the weak and helpless man's idea of vicarious revenge. I suppose most of us viewed the struggle with mixed feelings.²¹

The Muslim League also cooperated with the aspirations of the Congress. During the Congress session of 1916, the demand for political concessions was more insistent. Congress was of the opinion that the Government did not satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the people and therefore had become unsuited to the existing conditions and requirements. It declared that the time had come when His Majesty the King-Emperor should be pleased to issue a proclamation announcing that it was the aim and intention of the British policy to confer

21. Jawaharlal Nehru, *Toward Freedom* (New York : The John Day Company, 1942), p. 41.

self-government on India at an early date, and it demanded that a definite step should be taken towards this end by granting the reforms contained in the scheme prepared by the Congress and the All-India Muslim League, and that in the structure of the Empire, India should be lifted from the position of a dependency to that of an equal partner in the Empire along with self-governing Dominions. The British Government seemed to concur with the views expressed by the Congress, for on August 20, 1917, Mr. E. S. Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, made a memorable declaration in the House of Commons enunciating the new constitutional policy of the British Government towards India. The declaration read :

The policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible Government in India as an integral part of the British Empire. They have now decided that substantial steps in this direction should be taken as soon as possible and that it is of the highest importance as a preliminary to considering what these steps should be, that there should be a free and informal exchange of opinion between those in authority at home and in India. His Majesty's Government have accordingly decided, with His Majesty's approval, that I should accept the Viceroy's invitation to proceed to India to discuss these matters with the Viceroy and the Government of India, to consider with the Viceroy the views of local Governments and to receive with him the suggestions of representative bodies and others.

I would add that progress in this policy can only be achieved by successive stages. The British Government and the Government of India on whom the responsibility lies for the welfare and advancement of the Indian people, must be judges of the time and measure of each

advance, and they must be guided by the cooperation received from those upon whom the new opportunities of service will thus be conferred and by the extent to which it is found that confidence can be reposed in their sense of responsibility.

Ample opportunity will be afforded for public discussion of the proposals which will be submitted in due course to Parliament.²²

The declaration of August 20 was a turning point in the constitutional history of India. It marked the end of one epoch and the beginning of another. In pursuance of his declaration, Mr. Montagu came to India and in the company of the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, toured the whole country. After ascertaining the public opinion, they made their report, which was known as the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, on the basis of which the British Parliament passed the Government of India Act of 1919 giving effect to the policy contained in the declaration of August 20, 1917.

The Montagu-Chelmsford Report was received by the Indian leaders with mixed feelings. Mr. Gandhi said : "The Reforms are undoubtedly incomplete ; they do not give us enough ; we are entitled to more."²³ Indian public opinion declared itself rapidly, and from the very beginning there ensued a clear division between the Moderate and the Extreme political parties. The former welcomed the proposals as a real and substantial step towards the progressive realization of responsible government in the Provinces, but urged certain modifications concerned (with the exception of those affecting the Government of India) with the details rather than the essentials of the scheme. The Extremists, on the other hand, were definitely against the scheme.

22. P. Mukerji, *The Indian Constitution, Part II* (Calcutta and Simla : Thacker Spink and Co., 1920), p. 6.

23. *Young India*, 31st December, 1919.

One great obstacle in the development of Indian polity has all along been the problem of communal differences. These were inaugurated virtually during the time of Lord Minto (at the beginning of the present century) by the introduction of communal representation in the Legislature. But when the scheme of self-government was about to be formulated in 1917, it was fortunate that the differences between the two great communities—Hindu and Muslim—had been adjusted by the Lucknow Pact of 1916. This augured well for the coming struggle, and political agitation was set in motion with clear mind and clear heart. The year 1917 witnessed a quickening of the national consciousness throughout India, and in spite of an ever-increasing severity of police repression, the cry of "Home Rule" spread to the remotest corners of the land.

For the victorious Americans, the end of the war saw events of a more dramatic nature occurring nearer home, leaving them little leisure to study the political conditions in India which, in any case, were not of much interest to them. When the Secretary of State, Mr. Montagu, sailed for India to assure himself of fertile ground wherein to sow the seeds of self-government, he passed out of the ken of the average American. But still there was drama enough in the story to awaken some interest in certain quarters.

India, at this period, witnessed a remarkable approach to a unity of plan and purpose. It was the classical argument of the die-hards and the ardent supporters of British supremacy in India, that the protective hand of Britain was essential in that chaos of races, religions and castes that was India. They maintained that the British Raj and the Pax Britannica were the only guarantees for order and justice in a land where otherwise its numberless communities would be flying at each other's throats continually. The American public was fed upon this idea of the irreconcilable feud between Hindus and Muslims which would cause perpetual civil war immediately upon the withdrawal of British overlordship. As to how far this racial and religious feud really ate into Indian life and would continue to do so, the American public was not enlightened. But so

insistently was stress laid on the Hindu *versus* Muslim problem as a fundamental factor in Indian life, that interested Americans were startled when they read of a joint Hindu-Muslim delegation presenting a joint Hindu-Muslim programme of reforms to the Secretary of State.

The questions which presented themselves to the minds of those Americans who were alive to India's problems were : was the clash of races and religions in India largely the artificial product of British machinations for obvious purposes—the old scheme of Divide and Rule—or were ancient animosities being overshadowed by the budding hope for an all-India nationality ? Or was the union of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Parsis merely a temporary alliance for common gain ? Were the Muslims being driven into union with the Hindus by resentment against England's warfare upon the one important Mohammedan State, Turkey ? *The Nation* observed :

Too cynical an interpretation of races and motives will be eschewed by those who know how frequently before this a complex of motives has worked for national progress and national unity ; not excluding our own United States. The outstanding fact is that the masses or their representatives in India now think very much alike on the essentials of India's national needs and national rights as formulated in the Congress-League programme. There is general agreement that complete home rule for India on an equality with other British dominions is for the future.²⁴

The aftermath of war showed itself in widespread internal unrest. The underground revolutionary movement had assumed growing strength during the last months of the war. To commit political murders, bombs were manufactured on Lue's adoption anarchist organizations in Europe. The entry of Turkey into the war against the Allies agitated the

24. *The Nation*, CVI (February 28, 1918), 228.

Muslims, while a serious situation was created in the Punjab by the return of thousands of Sikhs from Canada, the United States, China and Japan. Most of these were the agents of Indian revolutionary organizations outside India, notably the Ghadar Party which was strongly entrenched in the United States. Many political crimes were committed by them and other revolutionaries, and a large number of fire-arms were smuggled into India.

Between August 1917 and December 1919 when the Government of India Act of 1919 was passed, the principles which were finally embodied in the Act were subjected to a torrent of criticism both hostile and friendly, ignorant and learned, equally in India and England. The reason for this great interest was obvious. The British Parliament and people felt that in conceding the goal of self-government to India and delegating to the control of popularly elected legislators some of the important departments of administration in the Provincial Governments, the Governments of Great Britain and India were taking a leap in the dark. Indian leaders, on the other hand, naturally felt that the principles should have been stated more clearly and whole-heartedly and should have been applied more generously. The status of India had been affected to some extent by her position as one of the signatories of the Treaty of Versailles and as an original member in her own right of the League of Nations. Indian leaders argued, therefore, with force and much justification, that this position on the international stage was inconsistent with a position of subjection on the smaller stage of the British Empire.

Such was the political situation in India on the eve of 1919. A brief survey, at the outset, of the system of government and administration of India as it existed at that time—the period from which we start our study—is essential for a clear understanding of the reactions of the American people. The Government of India, as ever, was responsible to Parliament through the Secretary of State for India, but Parliament as such never exercised an effective control over the Indian administration.

The American public was not fully aware of the intricacies of the complex and autocratic overnmental system and administration existing in India. Official pronouncements from the United Kingdom and the numerous articles written for the American and English press by retired Anglo-Indian officials whose lifelong experience in the Indian administration gave their words the stamp of authenticity, presented only the official point of view. Nowhere was a government so dominated by permanent officials as in India, and nowhere was it less tempered by the guidance of publicists enjoying the confidence of the intelligent classes. The Governor-General was surrounded by an almost solid phalanx of civil servants who presided over the various Departments and acted as their Secretaries.

Towards the end of the first decade of the present century, Lord Morley made a slight modification by appointing an Indian to serve in an advisory capacity on the Executive Council of the Governor-General. He did not, however, give the Indians the privilege of choosing the Indian Member, and since the appointment was made by the British Government, the Indian Member played the official tune. There was nothing to compel the British Government to appoint an Indian publicist enjoying the confidence of the people. In any case, even if an Indian of an independent turn of mind and force of character were allowed to serve on the Executive Council, he would have been a minority of one among six or seven.

A review of the structure of the Central Government as it stood at the beginning of 1919 (as constituted under the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909) will throw light on the nature of the Government.

The Central Government consisted of the Governor-General and his Council of sixty Members which had the official majority. The elected Members represented only the special and vested interests, and were elected by the non-official members of the Provincial Councils, by the landholders, Mohammedan communities in the Provinces and the Chambers of Commerce of Bombay and Bengal. The results of such a franchise are

obvious, as indicated by the Montagu-Chelmsford Report which said :

Narrow franchises and indirect elections failed to encourage in the members a sense of responsibility to the people generally, and made it impossible, except in special constituencies, for those who had votes to use them with perception and effect.²⁵

The Executive consisted of the Governor-General who kept in his own hands the responsibility for Foreign Affairs, the Commander-in-Chief who was the Head of the Military Department, and the Members in charge of Home, Finance, Revenue, Agriculture, Public Works, Commerce and Industry, Education and Legal Departments, etc. These posts were filled by the Crown for the most part from members of the Indian Civil Service. The Members of the Council controlled the administration of their Departments subject to the approval of the Governor-General who had to be consulted in case of certain eventualities. The nature of such a system of Government is obvious. The nominees of the King of England had always ruled India autocratically and there had never been a separation of the legislative from the administrative functions of the Government. The King and his servants controlled the administration, the Courts and the Legislature. In the words of Ramsay MacDonald, the British Labour Premier in the twenties :

At no place in the system of Indian administration does public opinion come in with its fresh motives, ideals and purposes formed outside offices and nurtured on something else than departmental files. From beginning to end, the office and the official mind dominate Indian Government.²⁶

25. P. Mukerji, *Indian Constitution* (Calcutta : Thacker Spink & Co., 1920) "Montagu-Chelmsford Report," Para. 81, p. VI.

26. J. Ramsay MacDonald, *The Government of India* (London : The Swarthmore Press Ltd., 1919), p. 64.

What has been said of the Supreme Government applied equally to the administrations of the Provinces which had Executive Councils. The Governors of the three Presidencies—Bengal, Madras and Bombay—like the Governor-General were sent out from England and did not, as a rule, belong to the Civil Service. An Indian served on the Executive Councils of those Provinces which had an Executive Council, and with that solitary exception the other Members were British officials. The Heads of other Provincial Administrations which did not have an Executive Council were all British officials who had risen from the ranks of the Civil Service, and as they did not have Executive Councils, one-man rule prevailed in those Provinces.

Until 1921, no Indian had been appointed to act as Head of a Presidency or a Province. No other Indian than the few members of the Executive Council had been placed in charge of any Department in the Supreme or any Provincial Government. The Secretaries of the various Departments were, without exception, non-Indians. Until 1919 only a few Indians were appointed as Under-Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries, and with these isolated exceptions, all posts of this description were filled by Britishers. Very few of the Indians who were appointed in those positions had that spirit of public service which could be found in the officials in America or England. Most of them were members of the Indian Civil Service, and having been trained in England, formed a part of the crowd of bureaucrats which in culture and training had very little in common with those over whom they were called upon to rule. The Indian members of the Civil Service were an isolated group, exalted in their position on the highest rung of the bureaucratic ladder—exalted enough to look down on their fellow Indians and to expect social equality with white members of their order, an equality which was in most cases denied them. Nehru wrote:

Indians belonging to the Civil Service, whatever their rank in the official hierarchy, do not belong to

the charmed circle. A few of them try to ape the manners of their colleagues without much success; they become rather pompous and ridiculous.²⁷

Someone remarked that the Indian Civil Servants were neither Indian nor civil, and certainly not servants.

The Presidencies and the Provinces were divided into sections, each presided over by a Commissioner. Hardly ever was an Indian appointed as a Commissioner. Those sections were further divided into Districts, each under a Deputy Commissioner or a Collector. Very few Indians were employed in that capacity. The right-hand man of the Deputy Commissioner was the District Superintendent of Police, who was entrusted with the preservation of peace in the area. There were only a handful of Indians employed in that capacity. Even many of the Assistants of the District Superintendents of Police were non-Indians. The other Departments—Judicial, Educational, Engineering, Postal, Telegraph and Railways—had similar tales to tell. No matter what the Department, the direction of affairs was not in the hands of Indians, except for a few scattered posts here and there. Indians filled all the subordinate and clerical posts, as the emoluments appertaining to those positions were not sufficient inducement for Englishmen to come to India.

It may readily be conceded that if the Government of India as it was then constituted had been left without any control from the United Kingdom, unsatisfactory as such control was, greater evils might have arisen. It was not a government of the people or by the people, and it was questionable whether it was "for" the people; if it had not been accountable to Parliament, its autocracy would have been intolerable.

27. Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (New York: The John Day Company, 1945), p. 292.

The Scheme of Constitutional Reforms

As matters stood at the beginning of 1919, Indians did not and could not exercise effective control over the administration of their country because, as indicated above, it was almost entirely conducted by British officials. The American public at large could not be expected to be familiar with the details of the intricate governmental machinery of the vast subcontinent, for with the exception of those few who were interested in making a specialized study of the administrations of foreign countries, the average person had little or no interest in such matters. Consequently, whatever knowledge the American public acquired about the Indian administration came to them through British publicists and propagandists who interpreted the situation from their own point of view.

In the absence of an independent and unbiased source of information, even those who specialized in the workings of the governmental structure in India had to depend upon Government reports which did not convey the intricacies and manipulations of the system, and on the British publicists who laboured long and hard to tell the citizens of their own country and others about the enlightened institutions the British Government had established in India. For example, Sir Valentine Chirol went to great pains to describe to the British public the rôle played

by the western-educated Indian in the administration as well as the public life of India, when he wrote :

They (the western-educated Indians) have almost a monopoly of all the liberal professions ; they sit on the Bench and in the Legislative Councils ; they are even represented in the Executive Council of Government, as well as in all the higher "Imperial" public services, whilst the subordinate services, commonly called "Provincial" are almost wholly recruited from their ranks.¹

Such statements, though apparently true, were entirely misleading. There is no doubt that in theory the educated Indians had almost a monopoly of most of the liberal professions and to some extent controlled Indian public life, but in practice the scope of those professions was infinitesimal in proportion to the population of the country. The number of educated Indians at that time was not more than 8%, including an appreciable number whose sole claim to education was the ability to sign their names. Indians had no control over the press—not even over the vernacular press. In India there was no "Freedom of the Press" as it is understood in the western world. Many papers were compelled to deposit large sums of money with the Government, sums which could be confiscated if they should publish news which the Government considered conducive to public unrest.

It was contended that Indians sat on the Bench and in the Legislative Councils. But exactly how many Indians actually occupied those exalted positions ? And what were the powers exercised by the Indians in the Legislative Councils ? The British publicists and propagandists did not care to enlighten the American public on those details.

Such statements as that of Sir Valentine Chirol quoted above

1. Sir Valentine Chirol, "India in Unrest", *Edinburgh Review*, CCXXVIII (July 1918), 155.

were published not only in British magazines and papers which had appreciable circulations in America, but in American periodicals and papers too, and this created a completely false impression in the United States about conditions in India. Every effort was made to demonstrate that the British Government was doing all it possibly could to introduce representative government. Some writers went even further and maintained that representative self-government had penetrated every corner of the British Indian Empire. Mr. Charles Johnston, as early as 1917, remarked :

But, taking these old bases of nationality as the larger units of its administration, the British Indian Government has for a long time been working to introduce the representative principle at this point also. The head of each of these provinces, the Governor or Lieutenant-Governor, as his style may be, is assisted in his work by a Legislative Council, and this Legislative Council always includes elected natives side by side with official members. They have, therefore, at least the beginnings of parliamentary life in each of these resuscitated ancient nations, and the practice of it is steadily spreading and expanding.

In the Legislative Council of the Governor-General of India, there are also elected native members, many of them men of high ability and great influence ; and their views invariably carry great weight.

So far, then, representative self-government has already gone in India ; while real, effective democracy, safeguarding the rights and wishes of even small minorities, penetrates into every corner of the whole British Indian Empire, taking care of races and tribes so various that they form a vast museum of ethnology.²

2. Charles Johnston, "Democracy and India", *Asia*, XVII (December 1917), 774.

India, at that time and even later, was so far removed from the Americans' orbit of interest that even the noises appertaining to the huge, mediaeval and awkwardly-working governmental machine failed to reach their ears ; at best, all they could possibly hear was an echo from across the Atlantic. Accounts of the British administration as related by the British propagandists were plainly false and misleading. True, the Governor-General of India, the Governors of the Presidencies and the Lieutenant-Governors of the provinces had Legislative Councils where Indians served. But the members of those bodies were required only to interpellate the officials, to raise debates on the budgets, to propose amendments to Bills and, with official consent, to move resolutions. These rights and privileges, too, were so restricted, and the Councils so constituted, that it was impossible for Indian members to exercise any real control over the Supreme or Provincial Governments. The officials were in the majority in the Imperial Legislative Council, and all that the minority, which represented the vested interests only, could hope to do was to exercise a moral influence over the administration. Although the officials were in a minority in the Provincial Legislative Councils, many of their non-official colleagues were their nominees and consequently a non-official minority existed in name only. The following remarks of Mr. Nehru, which may be considered to be the opinion of Nationalist India, show the other side of the picture :

Authority corrupts and absolute authority corrupts absolutely, and no man in the wide world today has had or has such absolute authority over such large numbers of people as the British Viceroy of India. The Viceroy speaks in a manner such as no Prime Minister of England or the President of the United States can adopt. The only possible parallel would be that of Hitler. And not the Viceroy only but the British members of his Council, the Governors, and even the smaller fry who function as Secretaries of Departments or Magistrates. They speak from a noble and unattainable height, secure

not only in the conviction that what they say and do is right but that it will have to be accepted as right, whatever lesser mortals may imagine, for theirs is the power and the glory.³

By the middle of the year 1918, little information regarding the Montagu-Chelmsford⁴ proposals had reached America. The high-sounding phrases of the declaration—"The increasing association of Indians in every branch of administration"..... "The gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to progressive realization of responsible government"—did create a favourable impression regarding the efficacy of the proposals. *The New York Times* published a cabled news item from London, according to which the report dealt with every aspect of Indian problems and difficulties and was a very great step in the direction of Indian home rule.⁵ Reviewing the recommendations, the paper said :

Its recommendations are the completion of the edifice of local self-government, giving a considerable measure of responsibility in various fields of provincial legislature, which are to be composed of directly elected representatives and which will act under the broadest franchise possible under Indian conditions.⁶

A few articles and letters by persons both British and American who were interested in Indian affairs appeared in some magazines; but as a rule they were only summaries of the declaration without much thoughtful comment. Mr. J. C. R. Edwing considered the declaration "A long and important step in the direction of Home Rule." He further asserted :

The proposal is a sincere one. It would be unjust to suggest that it has been dictated by fear of losing

3. Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (New York : The John Day Company, 1945), p. 292.

4. Referred to in Chap. I, p. 19.

5. *The New York Times*, July 6, 1918.

6. *Ibid.*

India. The present crisis in the West has unquestionably hastened matters.⁷

Mr. S. K. Ratcliff wrote : "Americans have been impressed by the announcement that the same Government (the British Government) is entering upon a scheme of constitutional reconstruction in India."⁸ Dr. Robert L. Schuyler said :

No problem of constructive statesmanship ever confronted any Government than that raised by the necessity for constitutional reforms in India. Unfortunately, the problem cannot receive among those responsible for its solution the attention which it deserves.⁹

He further maintained that even in normal times the English public had not shown itself sensitive to questions of Indian policy, and Parliamentary control was nominal rather than real. At the moment, moreover, the Government, Parliament and people of the United Kingdom were preoccupied with the supreme task of winning the war, and to that enterprise even a question that affected the interests and well-being of a fifth of the human race might well seem incidental.

Besides the comments of publicists, the press also gave editorial expression to its views. *The Nation* congratulated the British Government on Mr. Montagu's so-called "Monumental report on India," and wrote :

While the scanty notice thus far received by cable offers little basis for judgment as to just how far that

7. J. C. R. Edwing, "Germany and India," *Asia*, XVIII (September 1918), 731.

8. S.K. Ratcliff, "A Communication—England and India", *The New Republic*, XVI (August 1918), 197.

9. Robert L. Schuyler, "Constitutional Reconstruction of India," *The Nation*, CVII (November 1918), 531.

statesman has thought it possible to go in meeting the legitimate demand for Britain's Asiatic subjects for Home Rule, the well-known liberal views and clear intelligence of Mr. Montagu are themselves a guarantee that the full report will be found to embody the largest measure of self-government that a wise statesmanship can devise.¹⁰

The Nation further viewed the proposal as a great step in the direction of self-rule. It had, in the absence of a detailed report, taken its cue from the British press and believed, on the strength of a statement published in the *London Times* of May 18, 1918¹¹ that "the principle clearly enunciated by Mr. Montagu before he visited India has now been accepted by most divergent British schools of thought."¹² *The American Review of Reviews* believed :

There is no denying the fact that the British statesmen are gradually realizing the necessity of bringing about reforms in the Government of India..... The mind of England is fast changing as is changing also the mind of the world.....The task of the British administration in India has been much simplified by reconciliation between the Hindus and the Moham-medans.¹³

The Bellman considered that "limited home rule now seems promised to India."¹⁴ Judging the situation on its face value, this journal further commented :

10. *The Nation*, CVII (July 1918), 59.

11. *The London Times*, on May 18, 1918, declared : "The fundamental principles ..have been fortunately placed beyond controversy by the very clear and definite terms of the pronouncement which heralded the mission."

12. *The Nation*, CVII (July 1918), 60.

13. *The American Review of Reviews*, LVIII (September 1918), 315.

14. *The Bellman*, XXV (August 10, 1918), 147.

There can be no doubt of the sincerity and generosity with which Britain is entering upon this phase of her historical development.¹⁵

It argued that India, like Ireland, had presented peculiar difficulties to any experiment in self-government, and would doubtless long continue to do so. Those obstacles, according to its view, were racial, historical and social, as well as political, and successfully to bestow self-government on a country so poorly qualified for it although so well deserving of it, would be an unparalleled achievement.

The Literary Digest was of the opinion that

the scheme provides for the gradual introduction of home rule for India, first by admitting Indians to a larger extent than at present into local and municipal bodies, then into the Provincial Councils and finally into the supreme legislative body in India, the Viceroy's Council.¹⁶

It believed that undoubtedly the Anglo-Indian majority was carefully safeguarded in the scheme, but it had every hope that with time and education, Indians would assume more power. In its opinion, three facts stood out clearly from the discussions of the scheme. First, there was little disposition on the part of anyone to withhold from the authors due credit for making an honest attempt to solve a difficult problem. Second, even the most advanced Nationalist leaders were not anxious entirely to reject the scheme, though some of them first took that view. Third, the moderate as well as the advanced leaders felt that the proposals did not go far enough, and they insisted upon a greater or less modification.

The Literary Digest had arrived at these conclusions after a careful scrutiny of the opinions expressed by leaders belonging to various parties.

15. *Ibid.*

16. *The Literary Digest*, LIX (November 1918), 18.

The Missionary Review of the World remarked that the declaration of Mr. Montagu had been hailed with great delight by many and was undoubtedly in entire harmony with the ideals and purposes of a large section of the real friends of India amongst the British statesmen. It observed that a large increase in the privileges and powers of administration would be accorded to Indians by the scheme, and finally remarked : "It is only just that this should be so, as soon as suitable men are found."¹⁷

All in all, the opinions expressed by the American press regarding the scheme were very complimentary, and it was further impressed by the declaration when it came to learn that the Labour Party at its Nottingham Conference unanimously passed a resolution in favour of home rule for India. It believed, in spite of the powerful anti-Indian pressure groups, that the voice of the British people was behind India's aspirations. It felt that there was no lack of goodwill in England, but that in view of the tremendous pressure of the war there was real danger that there might be undue delay. *The Nation* sounded a note of warning to the British people that the process of democracy was being hastened in those days and more than ever delays were dangerous. The Tories who used Ulster created the Sinn Fein and made the Irish problem all but insoluble within the British Empire. If the same group would not create the same conditions among the three hundred millions of India, let them take the lesson of Ireland to heart :

Let them listen to the voice of the lost and wisdom of England's sons who have spoken in no uncertain terms for the redress of India's grievances and the concession of those rights of self-rule to which Mr. Montagu is pledged. For India, as her leaders have said more than once recently, no longer appeals to Great Britain's generosity but asks her to save the Empire. India in chains would drag Britain down to perdition ;

17. *The Missionary Review of the World*, XLI (April 1918), 242.

India free and prosperous and content will be a bulwark against all that the future may threaten. For the throne is established by righteousness.¹⁸

The American press, without doubt, commented very favourably—when it did comment—but only a small section took any interest in the scheme. In fact, the most remarkable feature was the lack of interest shown by the press. No daily paper made editorial comment on the scheme one way or the other, and many did not give any importance even to the news itself. *The New York Times*, well known for its keen interest in foreign affairs, published only one-fourth of a column, and other papers devoted even less space. Comment on the scheme was chiefly confined to editorials in periodicals and journals and to some individual writers. The constitutional advance of the people of India did not seem likely to make exciting news for the American layman, and consequently only a small section of the press showed any interest.

The bright hopes that were aroused in some quarters in America by the first reports of the proposals, due mostly to ignorance of the state of affairs in India and also to a lack of understanding of the implications of the proposals, but nevertheless hopes inspired by goodwill, were dimmed by the turn of events in India. Mrs. Besant's¹⁹ arrest and internment and the sharp political repression which followed created an adverse effect. A deputation of distinguished Indians which, amidst the plaudits of their countrymen, had started for England to put the case for home rule before the British people, was withheld at Colombo from proceeding further. All this went to indicate to the American public that there were strong forces working against the cause of Indian freedom. *The Nation* commented, in this connection, that indeed it was

18. *The Nation*, CVII (July 20, 1918), 60.

19. An English lady, Head of the Theosophical Society, who made India her home and worked for the cause of the poor. In 1914 she joined the Congress and was elected its President in 1917. In 1916 she started the Home Rule Movement, with branches all over the country.

apparent that those same influences of Tory reaction that have bedevilled the Irish situation are at work against the Indians. We do not refer simply to such organizations as Lord Sydenham's Indo-British Association whose interests and animus are well known and are correspondingly discounted. But there are some evidences of an anti-Indian campaign in the press, not only of Great Britain but of our own country as well. We know little about India and unfortunately care less ; and if we can only be made to believe that a great state is a mere congerie of unrelated, illiterate, quarrelsome, degenerate people, we shall be more easily led to support those who would for their own ends refuse the right of self-government.²⁰

There were a number of British magazines which enjoyed wide circulation in America and which contributed considerably to the shaping of the opinion of the American people regarding India. Well-meaning Englishmen would extol the aims and objects of the British rule in India and expound at length on their obligation to the vast illiterate majority of the Indian people, and their "righteous and peaceful" administration. Whatever the aims and objects and the sense of obligation for a "righteous and peaceful" government might have been, they certainly did not conform in their application to those assertions. Not only did non-official Britons indulge in the glorification of British rule—non-officials whose knowledge of the administration of the country did not have any practical bearing and which at best was derived from Government reports and contacts with officials—but even retired Anglo-Indians, with long experience in the administration of India, were not found wanting in a desire to display to the people in England and even in America the high moral principles which guided the British in their dealings with India, and the blessings of their domination. Sir Andrew Fraser, an ex-Governor of Bengal, wrote in *The Nineteenth Century and After* :

20. *The Nation*, CVII (July 20, 1918), 60.

The British rulers of India have long recognized that their principal mission has been to secure for the peoples of India a peaceful and righteous Government, to seek to give them education and enlightenment and to aim at making them fit for taking their share in the government and administration of the country. It is with this last matter—"the development of free institutions in this country"—that the problem before us is mainly concerned.²¹

In spite of these assertions regarding the "principal mission" of the British rulers, the education of the people after more than one hundred and fifty years of rule was still far below ten per cent of the population. Besides, the repressive policies adopted by the British Government after the war and the passing of the Rowlatt Bill²² did not conform to the above-mentioned assertions. In the same strain, Sir Andrew wrote :

Whatever political problems the Government of India may have to solve, it cannot forget the obligation under which it rests to maintain, with every effort in its power, a righteous and peaceful administration.²³

Sir Andrew was one among many who maintained that point of view.

Great pains were taken to tell the public of the progress made in the administration of the country and the growing association of Indians with it, and such statements created very favourable opinion in America of British rule. Sir Valentine Chirol said :

The ulterior hopes and aspirations of the educated classes have grown with their increasing influence.

21. Sir Andrew Fraser, formerly Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, "Future of India", *The Nineteenth Century and After*, LXXXIII (February 1918), 277.

22. Referred to in some detail in Chap. 3.

23. Sir Andrew Fraser, *op. cit.*

They monopolize practically all the liberal professions ; they control almost the whole of a much more widely-read press ; they fill the subordinate public services ; they occupy a large proportion of important posts in the superior services ; they play a much more conspicuous part in the enlarged legislative council and have been admitted even to the Executive Council of the Viceroy and of the Presidency Governors.²⁴

In the face of such assertions, any agitation for self-rule seemed merely the aspirations of a few extremists to gain control of the Government for selfish ends, and it could even be concluded that ultimately the Brahmin oligarchy would usurp all power and oppress the rest of the people—a disastrous result, for the prevention of which God Almighty had especially provided the British to act as trustees. Mr. Charles Johnston, formerly of the Bengal Civil Service, was no less a defender of the British rule in India when he wrote :

The British hold their position in India, therefore, not by force but by virtue of the work they do. Peace and justice are the first parts of their work.²⁵

He believed that India was enjoying real democracy, and further remarked :

Under British rule every element in India, however small, is free to develop and is encouraged to develop along the lines of its own genius, in its own tradition, speaking its own tongue. This is, as I have said, far more democratic than democracy under which minorities, even if they make up 49 per cent., are compelled to conform to the wishes of the majority, even of bare majorities.²⁶

24. Sir Valentine Chirol, "Constitutional Reform in India", *The Quarterly Review* (London), CCXXX (October 1918), 402.

25. Charles Johnston, "Democracy in India," *Asia*, XVII, (December 1917), 771.

26. *Ibid.*

According to Mr. Johnston's view, the Government in a democratic country represented only the majority, and under democracy the safeguarding of the rights of minorities was a most formidable difficulty, but which was ideally maintained under the British Government. Mr. Tyler Dennett harped on the same theme when he remarked :

India's case for complete self-government is at present weak, in that there is far too little to show in the way of Indian ability to handle the responsibilities of government and social leadership in matters which are already under the entire control of the Indians themselves.²⁷

However, a stray note, once in a while, from a few with broader perspectives, made the chorus of the apologists of British rule in India sound out of tune with reality. Mr. H. M. Hayward, an Englishman, remarked :

The press and the Anglo-Indians generally, write as if India is not and can never be fit to control her own destinies. Now if the one hundred and sixty years of British rule had greatly increased the well-being of the people of Hindustan ; if the 240,000,000 under our direct governance had been educated ; if Indian art and Indian culture had been encouraged and developed, even then it would be monstrous to assert, at a time when we are declaring for the right of self-determination and freedom for the peoples of all nations, that the 45,000,000 persons in a small island thousands of miles distant have justice on their side when they maintain despotic authority over one-fifth of the entire human race. But as we have done none of these things, the contentions of the destructionalists become utterly monstrous.²⁸

27. Tyler Dennett, "What Does India Want ?", *Asia*, XVIII (April 1918), 309.

28. *Asia*, XIX (July 1919), 672.

Mr. Charles Roberts, Member of the British Parliament and a man with liberal views, contended that the signal services of Indians to the Empire during the war had revealed a temper and loyalty which made the extension of self-government in India both possible and desirable. He believed that closer touch with the people through representative institutions developed citizenship and a more self-reliant manhood, brought to Governments increased financial strength and more assured confidence in dealing with social evils, and provided stronger support in popular feelings against external dangers. He wrote in *The Contemporary Review* (London) of September, 1918 :

Given prudence and development by stages, the grant of freedom does not undermine but strengthens the authority of Governments. It welds a great body of population into a loyal and conscious sense of partnership in an Imperial Commonwealth that stands for the maintenance of freedom. The Montagu-Chelmsford scheme is a guarded but substantial instalment of popular Government.²⁹

Systematic propaganda was not the only means employed to keep the people of America in the dark about Indian affairs. Any ugly aspect of the British administration was carefully kept out of the purview of the American public, as was the increasing struggle of nationalist Indians for the implementation of those very principles for which they and their brothers had fought on foreign battlefields.

"Because of distance," commented *The Bellman*, "the inevitable rigors of censorship and the pressure of great issues elsewhere in the world, the restiveness of ambitious India has not, until lately, gained due attention outside the British Government."³⁰

29. Charles Roberts, M.P., "Indian Reforms," *The Contemporary Review* (London), CXIV (September 1918), 245.

30. *The Bellman*, XXVI (May 17, 1919), 540.

It was generally understood in America that India had behaved exceedingly well during the war. Not only had she disappointed the Prussian expectation of a revolt, but she had released practically the entire British army of occupation and put into the field, in aid of the Allies, an additional million armed men. In the face of India's loyalty to the cause of the Allies and the widely-circulated accounts of Britain's eagerness to enlighten and educate the teeming millions of the great subcontinent in the intricate art of self-rule, America found it difficult to understand the post-war agitation in India. "On the surface, therefore, the recent disturbances in India were somewhat surprising,"³¹ wrote *The Bellman*. The publication of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, which was considered the first step on the road to self-government, left the American public even more bewildered. "In view of this promising and unquestionably earnest programme (referring to the Montagu-Chelmsford Report) it is difficult to understand the recent disturbances in India which were of an extent and virulence not easy to minimize,"³² the journal commented.

The visit of Mr. Montagu, Secretary of State for India, entailed a good deal of misunderstanding and some ill will in England. There was a strong feeling on the part of many that the very grave matter, which many considered contentious in detail, should not have been pressed before the close of the war. They maintained that since the war demanded the undivided attention of so many who ought to have an opportunity of considering and advising on those details, it was neither just nor expedient to proceed with their consideration at that time. "Personally I think," declared the Rt. Hon. Lord Sydenham, "that the announcement with which I find no fault, was singularly ill-timed."³³

31. *The Bellman*, XXVI (May 17, 1919), 540.

32. *Ibid.*

33. Rt. Hon. Lord Sydenham, "India and Mr. Charles Roberts, M.P.," *The Contemporary Review* (London), CXIV (November 1918), -496.

The agitation carried on in England, on the eve of the publication of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, by the privileged class which was nervous about its vested interests, raised grave doubts in the minds of the Indians as to Britain's sincerity. From the speeches, articles and notes contributed to the British press and appearing in circulars and leaflets issued by persons belonging to that class, Indians could not but gain the impression that the Secretary of State for India was not in a position to speak for the British Government and that the declaration he had made did not commit anyone but himself. The feeling gained ground among Indians that their country had been conquered by the sword and would continue to be ruled by the sword, no matter how long and how loudly they cried for responsible Government. The delay in the publication of the report only confirmed that impression.

Critics of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report maintained that it was impossible to lay in India the foundations of the kind of Government that the people were familiar with in Canada and Australia. They asserted that the great mass of the people, most optimistically reckoned at only 95% of the total population, was poor, ignorant and helpless, that 95% were not fitted for, nor did they seek responsible Government. In the words of Sir Harry L. Stephen, sometime a Judge of the High Court, Bombay :

The whole idea of politics apart from religion is foreign to India ; the Government, when represented by a man in unquestionable authority, is very great ; but religion comes first and pervades everything and in all social relations finds expression in the laws of Caste. How Responsible Government is to be adapted to Caste, the report does not say.³⁴

34. Sir Harry L. Stephen, "Responsible Government in India," *The Nineteenth Century and After*, LXXXIV (November 1918), 861.

Sir Andrew Fraser, formerly Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, said :

From the first we have made an ever-recurring mistake in governing India—namely, supposing that what prevails in England will suit India. We made it as regards education when we provided schools and Universities on English models ; we made it in regard to land tenures when we made the Permanent Settlement in Bengal. Lord Chelmsford and Mr. Montagu now propose to make the same mistake again on an unparalleled scale. What is the penalty of failure ? No one can measure it.³⁵

He believed that though the Government of India was very strong in the sense that it had extraordinary powers, yet it was very weak in the sense that it worked with a very narrow margin of safety.

Criticism of the proposals was not confined to England alone. Traces could be discovered in America as well, and various shades of opinion were expressed. Unfortunately, few writers showed any deep understanding of the implications and workability of the Reforms, but Robert L. Schuyler, a keen observer of Indian affairs, under the heading "The Constitutional Reconstruction of India," very aptly wrote :

The plan thus outlined does not in fact establish full responsible government on the English model, even with respect to the transferred functions, for the Governor is not to be under obligation to act upon the advice of his ministers.³⁶

There were quite a few who failed to grasp the import of the Reforms and had only a superficial knowledge of the whole:

35. Sir Andrew Fraser, "The Future of India," *Ibid.* (October 1918), 868.

36. Robert L. Schuyler, "The Constitutional Reconstruction of India," *The Nation*, CVII (November 1918), 531.

matter. Their comments only added to the general confusion, as the American public at large was not much alive to the problems affecting India and the intricate administrative machinery which was to be the result of the Reforms. Such superficial surveys of the scheme produced an entirely distorted picture. As an example, *The World's Work* commented in a leading article :

The chief obstruction to the success of the scheme is that the official Government has no efficient means of obtaining legislative and financial support. The Bill, as presented, empowers the Governor to call a "Grand Council" for the discussion of legislation needed by the official Government ; but as two-thirds of the councils would be representatives of the Ministry, this gives no real authority to the officials. Moreover, although official requisitions are given priority in exchequer disbursements, taxation can be imposed only by the legislatures. Thus the official Government is left dependent on the support of the Ministry. If the Bill is enacted without modification it must be assumed that the latter will never be opposed to the policies of the former, or it is inevitable that the official Government will become a mere name and powerless as an administrative unit. The most obvious solution of this difficulty is the establishment of a second legislature and exchequer to supply the official wants ; but Indian politicians rigorously oppose this on the ground that it would nullify the purpose of the whole Bill.³⁷

The following observations of Robert L. Schuyler would indicate, without going into detail, the wrong notion held by *The World's Work* regarding the efficacy of the Reforms. He wrote :

. . . Only an optimistic doctrinaire could fail to see in the practical working of the scheme the possibility

37. *The World's Work*, XXXIX (November 1919), 18.

of endless friction and collisions—collisions between ministers and the Governors who need not act upon their advice ; between ministers and legislatures which cannot remove them ; and between two parts of an Executive which strives to coordinate conflicting principles of government. Of the difficulties which may arise if their plan is put into operation the authors of the Report are aware, and they recognize that the plan can be worked successfully only by mutual forbearance and a strong common purpose.³⁸

Thus it would be observed that various opinions found expression in the American press. A certain section was amenable to British propaganda and hence offered a prompt echo to anti-Indian sentiments expressed by both the British and some Americans. On the whole, though the press displayed a marked disinterest in its approach to the Indian problem, and as the proposal and the consequent reforms did not directly affect any of the American interests, the tone of opinion, if expressed at all, depended on the predilections of the writer. But a few thoughtful Americans were bound to compare the declaration of the British Government and the consequent Act with the State Law of 1914 for the government of the Philippines, as both India and the Philippines occupied more or less the same position. To them, the preamble of the Act of 1919, referred to above, betrayed the authoritarian mind of the British Government. At best, it appeared merely to breathe the spirit of the schoolmaster who permitted some loosening of the bonds of discipline but warned his pupils that any further relaxation would depend upon their good conduct of which he himself was to be the sole judge. On the other hand, the spirit of freedom, treating the Filipinos as equals, promising them complete independence and avowing that the object of the law was but to enable them better to enjoy that independence, indicated by comparison the true nature of the Act of 1919. Mr. Bernard Houghton, who had

38. Robert L. Schuyler, *op. cit.*

for many years espoused the cause of India, commented in the *Political Science Quarterly* :

Section 3 of the U.S. law (U.S. Law of 1914 for the Government of the Philippines) contains provisions of the last importance in the nature of the declaration of rights. In the Indian Act no such provisions occur. The omission is intentional. Would not a declaration of rights destroy arbitrary power ? Would it not cut at the root of the Rowlatt Act, the Press Act, the Meetings Act and the host of other like restrictions under which India now groans ? Today, though there may be freedom for Britain in India, there is none for the Indian.³⁹

Tyler Dennett, in his article "What Does India Want?," maintained that the problem of meeting the demand of Home Rule in India was not considered synonymous with democracy and public spirit. He believed that India did not aspire to complete independence nor did she desire a change of masters, when he wrote :

The Filipino looks forward eagerly to the day when the Stars and Stripes shall be replaced by the Philippino flag. The Indian, if he entertains a similar hope at all, does not expect to see it realized for many, many years, and he does not talk about it. He may talk freely about what he regards as British misgovernment, but he will in the same breath say that he sees no European master whom he would prefer. He fears Germany, has feared Russia and is beginning to fear Japan. There is no doubt but that India, so far as international affairs are concerned, is absolutely loyal to the British flag.⁴⁰

39. Bernard Houghton, "Reforms in India," *Political Science Quarterly*, XXXV (December 1920), 546.

40. Tyler Dennett, "What Does India Want?" *Asia* XVIII (April 1918), 307.

Mr. Dennett had been consistently following this line of argument, and a few years earlier he had written in *Asia* to the effect that the sole demand of the educated Indians, who were at the forefront of the political movement, was for social equality with the Europeans. He said: "He (the educated Indian) does not wish for a thorough-going reorganization of India's social life which would open the way for the outcaste and the sweeper to become a Lloyd George or a President Lincoln."⁴¹ *The Missionary Review of the World* also remarked to the same effect when it wrote :

It must not be forgotten, as we study the movements of the hour, that the great mass of Indian people are very slightly, if at all, touched by them. They are appalled at the suggestion of the extremists that he and his fellows should supplant the man from the west. It is therefore fair to say that the general currents of the life of the country are as yet little changed.⁴²

Statements like these did reflect the truth to a considerable extent. The political aspirations of the vocal minority of the educated class did not go beyond their desire for some share in the administration of the country. They felt that as Indians they should be associated in the governance of their own land. The constitutional reforms that the Indians desired could be summed up very briefly—they wished the Indian administration to be largely Indianized. Complete independence was never the goal of the Indian movement until 1929 when Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru moved a resolution at the annual session of Congress at Lahore. Previously, Indians had wanted Dominion status as enjoyed by Canada, Australia and South Africa. Until 1919, they wished at most for the Government to be made responsible to Indians and for its powers and privileges to be increased in order to make it

41. *Ibid.*, p. 312.

42. *The Missionary Review of the World*, XLI (April 1918), 242.

competent to manage the purely domestic affairs of the country with as little reference as possible to Whitehall. Nobody could tell them in reply that the few Indians who had been installed in high offices had not, as a rule, proved a success, or that there was a dearth of Indians to fill other responsible positions that might be thrown open to them. Who could question the ability of those Indians who had been returned by various electorates to the several Legislative Councils? Who could say that they were not capable of bearing additional responsibility? Who could doubt that there were many other Indians available creditably to fill similar offices? The Indian's sense of pride was hurt when he was not permitted to enjoy a status of equality with the foreigners in his land. The cruel discrimination suffered by Indian nationals in South Africa where Gandhi forged his weapon of Satyagraha (later to be applied at home) only added fuel to the fire. The root of the question seemed not so much political as racial, and what agitated the educated Indians was not just the dire poverty of the masses, which had come to be taken as a matter of course, but the discrimination practised against them in their own country. Even the educated Indian found it difficult to travel in the same railway compartment as the whites; he could not find a place in hotels which were patronized by the westerners; he was not allowed to join clubs or other social organizations frequented by the white masters.

Naturally, all this was felt more by those Indians who had the advantage of foreign education, some of whom had surpassed their white colleagues in service and in academic pursuits. Some of them occupied higher positions in the administration of the country, but even so their white subordinates would not associate with them socially. It was not surprising, therefore, to find that in the early stages of the life of the Indian National Congress, the voice of the people who had occupied high Government positions could also be distinctly heard.

The question arises, what degree of popular backing did the Home Rule movement command? To answer this question, one may divide India into three groups—the Princes, the

educated minority which did not exceed eight per cent and the vast majority of the poor classes. The demand for Home Rule did not affect the Princes; they were autocrats in their own States, holding on to their lofty positions on the sufferance of the British Government. Any demand for self-government by the Princes was likely to be a source of inspiration to their subjects—a state of affairs which would not have been palatable to them. The third group, the bulk of the population, hardly knew what Home Rule was; the phrase itself, being a foreign expression, was hardly likely to convey to them even the barest elementary idea.

The Home Rule Movement was almost exclusively an upper and middle class project; indeed, before the advent of Mahatma Gandhi, the masses took no part in it at all. The bulk of the population derived its subsistence from the land, and the problems affecting their lives were entirely different from those affecting the educated class which confined itself mostly to the big towns and cities. Reforms affecting land tenure would have drawn the peasants into the movement, but they played no direct part in the demands of the Home Rulers. Any amelioration of the lot of the peasant would have affected the interests of the landlords who constituted an important section of the educated class demanding Home Rule.

The fact that the great mass of the people was unaffected by the Movement was commented upon by various writers in the American Press. The Reverend M. A. Pederson of Minneapolis, who was in India for a number of years, remarked that the country was not so full of wild unrest and dissatisfaction with British rule as might be imagined. There was “only a small minority of professional agitators,” he commented, “who are advertising the British rule as a total failure.”⁴³ American missionaries usually expressed similar views, for they confined their activities chiefly to rural areas where the political consciousness was practically non-existent amongst the people. People were too uneducated and backward to realize

43. *The Literary Digest*, LXV (May 1920), 58.

the possibility of a change by taking part in politics without some organized leadership which would reflect their interests. If they had shown any political awareness and taken an organized step, it would have been only to better their own condition, and would have taken shape in agitation not so much against the British as against the native landlords. Mr. Tyler Dennett wrote in this connection :

One wonders on going into these villages and seeing the impoverished lives of the inhabitants, whether they even know that there is such a place as India. Although this statement will be violently denied by the more aggressive Home Rulers, especially those in America who pleasantly gloss over some of the facts and paint to the American public an India which does not exist, I find little evidence whatever that the average Indian villager is anything more than a passive neutral in the fight for Home Rule. True, he is beginning to be affected by the agitation, but close questioning reveals that he does not yet know what Home Rule means.⁴⁴

There was undoubtedly a great deal of truth in Mr. Dennett's statement.

It has already been said that before India began to attract the attention of the American press, the only sources of information about the country had been the British and the missionaries. The latter went to India to sow the seeds of Christianity, and found their most fertile soil amongst the poor in the villages where the age-long caste system was still operating. The accounts of the missionaries about Indian life were full of the caste system, and no matter how long they stayed in the country, caste always seemed to intrigue them to a far greater extent than any other aspect of Hindu society.

44. Tyler Dennett, "What Does India Want," *Asia*, XVIII (April 1918), 309.

Caste was the favourite theme, too, of casual visitors and tourists who would go to India with preconceived notions about this strange system. The result was that the entire thinking of the American public in relation to India was influenced by and in most cases confined to their limited knowledge of the caste system—in fact, to such an extent that they were almost obsessed by it. This state of affairs also existed among the more enlightened sections, but fortunately there were a few notable exceptions to prove the rule.

The caste system is essentially a social phenomenon, and its full implications were not grasped by the American public. It was perhaps the most popular topic of conversation whenever India was under consideration, and so large did it loom in the minds of Americans that even in serious discussion, the political and economic life of the country would be interpreted in terms of the caste system. “Home Rule cannot be successful where caste prevails,”⁴⁵ commented *The Missionary Review of the World*. “The caste system and democracy cannot both exist in India,”⁴⁶ wrote Father Brenton T. Badley in *The World Outlook*, a journal published by the Interchurch Movement of North America. Sober opinion, however, did not conform to that view. The editorial remarks of *The New York Times* on this point are noteworthy :

May.....the grumbling of the old Indian officials be proved foolish and brought to naught the apprehension natural to those who wonder how much democracy is possible among the caste-bound Hindus.⁴⁷

So it was popularly conceded by missionaries and American laymen alike that the caste system was the greatest stumbling block on India's road to progress. But in spite of this fact, Father Badley maintained :

45. XLI (April 1918), 243.

46. VI (July 1920), 11.

47. December 8, 1919.

The three greatest factors contributing to India's progress are the Bible, the English language and modern education. England has been back of all three, and these have struck at what has always been typical of the old, undemocratic India. England has built democracy into India's thinking. Let us not slash her in order to get a striking setting for India's claims.⁴⁸

Such statements created confusion. They smacked of British propaganda, or betrayed ignorance of the true state of affairs. Any serious student of Indian affairs would disagree with the claim that "England has built democracy into India's thinking," for it is difficult to conceive of an autocratic state building democracy into the thinking of a subject country. "Increasing association of Indians in every branch of administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible Government in India" was the aim declared by the British rulers. These aims could be achieved only through successive stages. There was no talk of democracy in India at that time; not even the Indian leaders themselves talked in terms of democracy.

Father Badley could be considered to represent the view of the Christian Church of America, and referring to the introduction of constitutional reform, he maintained that there was no question as to the Church welcoming the new day. All the work of the Christian Church of America for the people of India had been preparing them for the responsibilities of that very thing. Father Badley went on to say:

Two things at least are fundamental to any democracy: intelligence and character. In the former, India's handicap is serious, indeed, as already indicated. How can there be real self-government with nine-tenths of the population absolutely illiterate? As to character, the Church can but believe that character apart from Christ is not possible. This is an extreme statement

48. *The World Outlook*, VI (July 1920), 11.

but a close study of even nominally Christian lands will support it. Where we have failed in the public life and concerns of America or England, we have failed because men in high places have dared to walk and talk and legislate without Christ. To the extent that India is without Christ, the future of her Home Rule government is imperilled. The same may be said of any other land.⁴⁹

This statement calls for little comment. To say that character apart from Christ is not possible borders on fanaticism. With an attitude coloured by strong religious feeling, it is not possible to view things in their true perspective. The Reverend Father laboured under the misapprehension that literacy was the only test of intelligence, and unfortunately such sweeping and erroneous statements do make an impression on the minds of those who have but a passing interest in the problem or who have too little time to study the details for themselves. The following quotation from an article by the same writer clearly indicates the type of propaganda indulged in by the missionaries :

But India has seen the face of Christ and knows him to an extent impossible to show in any statistics. The Bible is the best known book of the land. It is read in countless thousands of Hindu and Mohammedan homes. In instances in untold numbers its precepts are followed in private life and are shaping public life.

Let the words of a Hindu ascetic close these lines. He was dressed in the saffron robes of his class, and read from the pages of a Sanskrit book. A missionary met him and they engaged in conversation. They talked in the Hindi language, of the things that are eternal. Then the Hindu surprised the missionary by dropping his Hindi and speaking in fluent English. He put aside the Sanskrit volume and from a bag took out a bundle carefully wrapped in cloth. This he undid, and

49. *Ibid.*

produced a copy of the New Testament. Listen to his words—he seems to speak for India: “There is this difference between Christ and all the religions of India: all the others are passing away. Christ alone will remain.”

Home Rule is coming to India, and this demands a better India. The new spiritual forces that will transform the people and fit them for the larger, better day, are the supremely important concern of her friends now. The day that India finds herself, spiritually, will mark a new era for Asia—perhaps for the world.⁵⁰

Now let us see what Mr. G. W. Steevens, has to say regarding the work of the missionaries:

What else have we to count on for the regeneration of India? Christianity? It has made few converts and little enough improvement in the few; is it not too exotic a religion to thrive in Indian soil?⁵¹

True, Mr. Steevens’ book was published before the close of the last century, but subsequent decades showed nothing to warrant Father Badley’s statements.

Whatever opinions the missionaries might have held regarding the Hindu social system or the capacity of the Indians for self-government, they undoubtedly rendered great service to India in the field of education. In his book *Discovery of India*, Jawaharlal Nehru has commented at some length on the work of the missionaries. He says:

The desire of the Christian missionaries to translate the Bible into every possible language thus resulted in the development of many Indian languages. Christian mission work in India has not always been admirable or

50. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

51. G. W. Steevens, *In India* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1899), p. 358.

praiseworthy, but in this respect as well as in the collection of folklore, it has undoubtedly been of great service to India.⁵²

In the ranks of those who believed that the Indians were not fit to shoulder the responsibilities of self-government were to be found—along with the British and the Christian missionaries—Americans like Mr. Charles Johnston who was for some time a member of the Indian Civil Service. This was his blood-curdling prediction:

There is on the one hand the Brahman oligarchy, as determined as ever to enslave all India, and, on the other, a small group of conquering races like the Mohammedan invaders (Arabs, Persians, Afghans, Mongols) or like the predatory Mahrattas of the central hills. If Britain abandoned India tomorrow, the Brahman oligarchy would be back in power the day after; but on the third, the Mohammedan and Mahratta warriors would be slitting Brahmanical throats; on the fourth day they would try to cut each other's throats—exactly as they were doing when the British came. Or, if their manners are now more mild, this simply marks what the British trusteeship has accomplished since Plassey in 1757.⁵³

Mr. Price Collier was even more emphatic in his opinion when he wrote a few years before the Great War:

My own opinion as an observer from the outside is that people of India are no more fit for representative Government than are the inmates of a menagerie, and that were the British to leave India for three months, India would resemble a circus tent in the dark with the

52. *Discovery of India* (New York: The John Day Company 1945), p. 292.

53. Charles Johnston, "Fuller Liberty for India", *The North American Review*, CCIX (June 1919), 778.

menagerie let loose inside. There would be no safety except for the cruel, and those who could hide; and there would be no security because there would be no shame. Tooth and nail and fang would have full play again, and that callous cruelty which, more than any other quality, stamps the Oriental as different from the Occidental, would slaughter the strong, enslave the weak and market the women for the harem or the plough.⁵⁴

54. Price Collier, *The West in the East, from an American Point of View*, (New York : Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), p. 97.

Repression in India

At the beginning of the year 1919, "The dominant note all over India was one of waiting and expectation, full of hope and yet tinged with fear and anxiety,"¹ wrote Nehru. The war had accomplished much towards the unification, along certain broad lines, of bodies standing for Indian political aspirations, but it had also been responsible for the growth of well-marked political parties. Differences had grown between the Moderates (the National Liberal Party) and the so-called Extremists (the National Congress Party) in the matter of their respective receptions of the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme. The Moderates wanted to expand the scheme in certain essential parts and were satisfied that it would constitute a basis for future political progress. On the other hand, the Nationalists disliked the whole scheme and regarded it as fundamentally disappointing and unsatisfactory.

The year, as its very beginning, also saw changed conditions which arose from the cessation of hostilities with Germany and which produced a marked effect on the internal policies of India. All through the war, India had remained loyal to Britain, believing firmly that the war was being fought for justice, for

1. *An Autobiography* (London : John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1939), p. 39.

freedom and for the cause of self-determination. She unhesitatingly supported the cause of the Allies with men, money and material. Now the period of stress was over and so was the complacent mood of the British Government. Finding that the latter was not disposed to abide by the lofty principle, so loudly proclaimed during the preceding years, that the war was being fought "to make the world safe for democracy," the attitude of the Indian nationalists also changed. There were large parts of the British Empire in Asia and Africa where British rule was maintained by methods of government more akin to autocracy than democracy, and it was difficult for Indians to reconcile this fact with the Allies' noble wartime aims.

The war message of President Wilson, delivered in Congress, had been characterized as the most momentous ever uttered by any President of the United States of America. The principles it enunciated echoed the sentiments of the Indians fighting for their liberation. Among other things, the President said that America's object had always been to vindicate the principles of peace and justice in the life of the world as against selfish and autocratic power, and to set up such a concert of purpose and action as would henceforth insure the observance of those principles. To this he added that the chief menace to world peace and liberty lay in the existence of autocratic Governments backed by organized force and not by the will of the people. He continued :

Only free people can hold their purpose and their honour steady to a common end and prefer the interests of mankind to any narrow interests of their own. America is prepared to fight for the ultimate peace of the world and for the liberation of its peoples ; for the rights of nations great and small and for the privilege of men everywhere to choose their way of life and of obedience ; for the rights of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own Governments ; for the rights and liberties of small nations ; for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring

peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free.²

This statement had been greatly appreciated by the Nationalists in India and had given great impetus to their struggle to implement those principles. Every sentiment expressed by the President was in perfect accord with Indian thought insofar as Britain's conduct was concerned. To the freedom-seeking Indian, England was a "selfish and autocratic power" while the Government of India was "backed by organized force" which was controlled wholly by the will of that Government and not by the will of the Indian people. The Indians felt that they were being deprived of man's rightful privilege to choose his way of life and to have a voice in his own Government. With eager eyes straining into the mists of the uncertain future, the Indians had been heartened and made hopeful by the President's memorable address.

But after the successful conclusion of the war, the same old arguments were used and the same old reasons were given for the continuance of the old order. British spokesmen continued to harp on the same old tune. In this connection, Sir Valentine Chirol remarked :

These areas are peopled by alien races either still on an extremely primitive or entirely different plane of civilization.....We have pledged ourselves to an attempt to acclimatize democratic institutions amongst huge congeries of Indian people to whom democratic forms of Government and the whole conception of democracy have been hitherto wholly alien.³

The same evasive pronouncements set the pace for India's post-war internal politics, and it is not surprising, therefore, that in the early months of the year there was noticeable in the Indian

2. *The New York Times*, April 3, 1917.

3. "Acclimatized Democracy in India", *Asia*, XVIII (October 1918), 837.

press a tendency to attack the Government with much greater vigour than had been evident during the preceding years.

As already mentioned, the publication of the Montagu-Chelmsford report entailed differences of opinion not only between the Nationalists and the Moderates, but also within the ranks of the former. There was a marked uneasiness in the political atmosphere of India at that time, and the Congress session at the close of 1918 had brought no respite, although it dealt at great length with the Montagu proposals. Congress maintained that the people of India were fit for responsible Government and repudiated the Report's assumption to the contrary. Muslim League sessions were held at the same time, and they adopted the resolution on practically the same lines as did the Congress.

Before the Bill of 1919 could be passed into law, however, matters in India assumed an unfavourable aspect far removed from the atmosphere of good-will which was indispensable for the successful working of such a complex and intricate machine. Besides, Nationalist Indians were greatly agitated by the feeling of being left out in the cold now that the danger to the Empire was over. The Muslims were greatly excited over the treatment of Turkey and the Khilafat question. Into this atmosphere, surcharged with passion and excitement, the two Rowlatt Bills made their appearance and acted as fuel to the fire.

It was in order to fight the implementation of the Rowlatt Acts that Gandhi entered the political arena, and from that time onward, Nationalist agitation in India was conducted under his guidance.

The Rowlatt Commission, under the leadership of Judge Rowlatt of London and consisting of a few Englishmen and two Indians, devoted many months investigating and reporting on the nature and extent of the criminal conspiracies connected with the revolutionary movement—

... to examine and consider the difficulties that have arisen in dealing with such conspiracies and to

advise as to the legislation, if any, necessary to enable the Government to deal effectively with them.⁴

Their investigations were chiefly confined to police records. Never (according to their own confession) did they consult the public, for whose safety the Commission had ostensibly undertaken its task.

The outcome of the Rowlatt investigation was the presentation to the Governor-General-in-Council of two measures known as the Rowlatt Bills. The passage of those measures shook to its roots the confidence of the Indian people in Britain's aims and pronouncements. People of every shade of opinion and belief decried them, and the Bills were passed over the protests of even the most conservative members of the Legislature.

In order to grasp the full significance of and the reasons for an all-India agitation against the Rowlatt Bills, which ultimately became an Act of the Central Government we must examine the findings of the Commission.

As has been said, the findings of the Commission were embodied in two Bills with many sections and sub-sections. The first Bill was an amendment of the Indian Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure of 1898; the second made provision for emergency powers for the Government, supplementing the ordinary criminal Law in special circumstances. Under the provisions of the Bills, any person in possession of any seditious document with the intention of publication or circulation could be punished with imprisonment extending to two years or with fine or with both, unless he could prove he had it in his possession for lawful purpose. A seditious document was defined as any document containing any word, sign or visible representation which could instigate or was likely to instigate, whether directly or indirectly, the use of criminal force against His Majesty or the Government established by law in British India, or against any public servant. Thus, under the Bills, people could be arrested and imprisoned for being in possession

4. Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *History of the Indian National Congress* (Bombay: Padma Publications, 1946), I, p. 157.

of either published or unpublished documents or pictures of a seditious nature. There was, of course, no way of knowing what could be considered seditious until after the conviction. The scope of operation of the Bills in this respect was very wide. In accordance with British Indian judicial precedent, absence of affection was dis-affection, and to excite or attempt to excite dis-affection against the Government was one form of sedition. So, under these circumstances, any person criticising the actions of an ordinary police official—not to mention higher authorities—could be considered a seditionist.

The prescribed method of arrest and trial throws considerable light on the nature of the Rowlatt Bills. According to Section 25 of Bill No. 2, on intimation from the Local Government to the investigating authority, giving a concise statement in writing setting forth the grounds on which the Government considered it necessary that the order should be made, the investigating authority was required to hold an enquiry *in camera* for the purpose of ascertaining what in its opinion—having regard to the facts and circumstances adduced by the Government—appeared against the person concerned. In this process the investigating authority was not required to disclose to the person whose case it was considering any fact considering the case, nor did the person have the right to appear or be represented by a pleader before the investigating authority. To crown all this, the inquiry could be conducted in any manner the investigating authority considered best suited to elicit the facts of the case, and in making the inquiry such authority was not even bound to observe the rules of the Law of Evidence.

It is clearly evident, thus, that the inquiry could be held in secrecy. The accused had no way of securing legal advice; he could not bring any witness to testify for him. The investigating authority was armed with arbitrary power to do as it pleased, for, as noted above, it was not bound to observe the rules of the Law in Evidence. As already mentioned, the inquiry could be conducted “in any manner the investigating authority found best suited to elicit the facts of the case.” It is well known to all students of history that in order to obtain

confessions. The reference is to the Inquisition in the Middle Ages in Europe, resorted to the process of weakening physical strength and to torture, and it is a fact of common knowledge in India that even before the adoption of the provision quoted above, suspects and detainees had been thrown into dark, solitary cells and deprived of food, sleep and rest.

Nowhere in the civilized world was there sanction for trial without jury, so the Star Chamber of the Tudor and Stuart periods in England was revived in the twentieth century in India. The Rowlatt Bills provided (Bill No. 2, Sec. 5) for a special Court of three High Court Judges who sat at any place they deemed best, and no jury was permitted to sit with them. Juries were excluded in accordance with the recommendations of the Rowlatt Commission, for they considered it necessary to exclude juries and assessors merely because of "the terrorism to which they are liable." The trials were required to be conducted behind closed doors and there was no way by which the public could learn the method of procedure or ascertain the evidence produced, for the Court could prohibit or restrict to any degree the publication or disclosure of its proceedings.

Under the provisions of the judgment of the Court was final and conclusive, for the Bills provided that notwithstanding the provisions of the Indian Penal Code or of any other law for the time being in force, or of anything having the force of law by whatever authority made or done, there was no appeal from any order or sentence of the Court and no High Court had the authority to revise any such order, to sentence or to transfer any case from such Court, or to have any jurisdiction of any kind in respect of any proceedings of the case. Once convicted, the accused must continue to carry his burden of guilt even after the expiration of his prison sentence. He was required to execute bond with security for good behaviour, to remain in a specific area and to notify the Local Government of his residence and any change of residence for the period for which security was required. If any of his friends or relations associated with him, even when they did not share his views or approve of his actions, they were liable for persecution.

The Local Government was armed with arbitrary powers, and the dividing line between the executive and the legislative functions was hard to perceive. Wherever, in the opinion of the Local Government, there were reasonable grounds for believing that a person had been or was concerned in any scheduled offence, the Local Government was authorized to issue in respect of such person an order for his arrest without warrant and his confinement in such place and under such conditions and restrictions as the Government might specify. The arrest of the person concerned would be effected at any place where he might be found or by any police officer or any other official to whom the order might be directed. The Government might also search any place which in its opinion had been or was being or was about to be used by any such person for any purpose which the Government might think was prejudicial to the public safety.

Such were the arbitrary powers given to the Local Governments. The sanctity of the Indian home was not inviolable. The oft-quoted British sentiment that "A man's home is his castle" could not be applied in India, and the country was subject to such oppressive measures during time of peace as in other countries were not applied even in wartime. It is not difficult to imagine, therefore, the fervour of the agitation carried on by Mahatma Gandhi against the provisions of the Bills. His statement before the Hunter Commission, which was instituted to inquire into the Amritsar massacre⁵, is significant. He said :

When the Rowlatt Bills were published I felt that they were so restrictive of human liberty that they must be resisted to the utmost. I observed, too, that the opposition to them was universal among Indians. I submit that no State, however despotic, has the right to enact laws which are repugnant to the whole body of the people, much less a Government guided by

5. Described in Chapter III, pp. 75-76.

constitutional usages and precedent such as the Indian Government.⁶

Though the Government had declared that the provisions of the Bills would be used only against *bona fide* criminals and that the loyal and law-abiding citizens need have no fear, the people of India still considered them an encroachment upon their liberty if the Government could enjoy such arbitrary powers against which a citizen had no legal remedy. The sentiments of the Indians were echoed by Mr. Bernard Houghton when he remarked :

India during the war had remained loyal to the British flag. Believing that the war was waged for liberty, for justice and for the rights of the people to govern themselves, she supported freely the cause of the Allies with men and food and so far as her poverty allowed, with money. For reward she received the Rowlatt Act. This Act, which aimed to perpetuate the arbitrary powers exercised during the war, came to India as a slap in the face. Every man felt himself in fetters, his future progress threatened, himself and his belongings at the mercy of officials and informers.⁷

The American press did not comprehend the implications of the provisions of the Rowlatt Bills. The defenders of the Bills had made enough propaganda by creating a mountain out of the molehill of German and Soviet adverse activities in the colonies and particularly in India, and the Bills were justified by them as being necessary to deal with plots instituted by foreign agents. Mr. Ernest B. Lee wrote in *The Fortnightly Review* :

The Britons justified the Rowlatt Committee Report on the ground that the extremists in India were in

6. *Young India—1919-1922* (New York, B. W. Huelisch Inc. 1923), p. 11.

7. "Reforms in India", *Political Science Quarterly*, XXXV (December 1920), 549.

league with the Germans and maintained that had the plot succeeded it would have plunged India into a state of turmoil and anarchy similar to that which prevails in Russia today.....No Englishman who reads the Rowlatt Report can fail to be impressed with its scrupulous fairness, its clear and cogent reasoning and its weight as an unimpeachable record of facts based upon an enormous mass of intricate documentary evidence.⁸

The Christian Science Monitor of Boston, one of the few papers which displayed much interest in the Act, observed :

Nevertheless, in spite of the quite outrageous mis-statements which have been assiduously put in circulation about the Rowlatt Act, especially throughout the Punjab, it needs to be remembered that the Act cannot in any way, and does not in any way, affect the rights of the law-abiding citizen. The Rowlatt Act is aimed, first and last, at that peculiar product of India described by Mr. Montagu as "the real revolutionary", the man who lurks in dark corners, whom nothing can locate or convert, who never works directly but always indirectly, and whose chief mark is the young student, often a mere schoolboy, of the "respectable classes." The Punjab has been the special hunting ground of these men. They have done and are doing their utmost, but, as a well-known authority declared recently, the vast majority of the people have been no more fundamentally affected by these machinations than by the numerous plots and conspiracies engineered, chiefly in the Punjab, through German agencies during the first year or two of the war.⁹

The same paper, in a leading article under the title "India and the Rowlatt Bills," gave the reasons for the enactment of the

8. "The Case for the Rowlatt Act," *Fortnightly Review*, CVI (August 1919), 229.

9. *The Christian Science Monitor*, August 29th, 1919.

Bills and said that prior to the outbreak of war, the steady growth of revolutionary crimes of all kinds throughout the country was a matter of grave concern to the Indian authorities and that it was fully recognized that those crimes were by no means symptomatic of anything like general or even widespread disaffection, but that they were very largely the achievements of a special brand of agitator working chiefly among the young men of the "respectable classes." So carefully did those agitators conduct their propaganda, the paper observed, that all the resources of the law were quite inadequate to deal with it. It went on to say :

The situation is unquestionably as complex a one as has ever faced the Indian authorities, and the chief difficulty lies in the fact that the Indian leaders, whilst professing, and indeed quite evidently displaying, the utmost loyalty to the British rule, have quite failed to grasp the fact that the Rowlatt Bills does not and is not designed to restrict in any way the legitimate ventilation of opinion; that the Government is responsible for the peace and tranquillity of the whole country, and is bound to deal with law-breakers wherever they may be found. As one prominent Anglo-Indian paper pointed out, the arguments used against the Bills have no relation to the terrible problem of anarchical crime. There is much talk of the "liberty of the subject," of the danger of interfering with political activities, of the "slur on India's honour," of the danger of arming the bureaucracy with special powers and so forth, but the opponents of the measure have come forward with no alternative proposals.¹⁰

The Bellman had a different reason to offer for the passing of the Rowlatt Bills. It remarked :

The Bills appear to have been framed in anticipation, not necessarily of a revival of terrorist plots, but of

10. *Ibid.*, May 27, 1919.

the special danger to public order likely to arise with the ending of the war, the return of the Indian army from many fields, and the likelihood of modest political controversy accompanying the task of political reconstruction.¹¹

The Rowlatt Act, which was of vital importance to the Indians, did not attract much attention in the American press. The important journals and even the leading dailies did not comment one way or the other. There are several explanations for this somewhat surprising state of affairs. Firstly, the passage of an Act by the Government of India was not likely to be of particular interest to Americans, and secondly, propagandists had already prepared the ground for its reception in the U.S.A. The American public had been told that India was seething with revolutionary activities and that the hands of Germany and Russia could be discerned behind the young radical element of the country who were reputed to be mostly students. The Act was simply intended to strengthen the hands of the administrators to subdue the undesirable activities of misguided youth, and no one could disagree with the Government for taking such precautions to safeguard the general peace and tranquillity. It was made clear that loyal citizen need have no fear.

Under the circumstances, the lack of interest of the American press in the passage of the Rowlatt Act is quite easy to understand. Those small sections of the press which did express an opinion only justified the Government's action—usually using the same arguments as those put forward by the British Government.

One special feature of British post-war propaganda in America stands out clearly. All the revolutionary activities of the India people, particularly of the younger generation, were traced back either to Berlin or Moscow. The activities of Indians resident in America, some of whom (at the instance

11. XXVI (May 17, 1919), 540.

of the British Government) were tried after the war for subversive activities against the cause of the Allies, greatly strengthened the arguments of the British propagandists. Notable Indians like Rabindranath Tagore, who came to America on a cultural mission, were also implicated in the activities of the revolutionaries. *The New York Times* published a news item which said that the Indian poet's name was linked with German plots, and :

Secret papers intercepted by the Government purported to show that Sir Rabindranath Tagore had enlisted the interests of Counts Okuma and Teranchi, former Japanese Premier, in a movement to establish an independent Government in India.¹²

It was repeatedly told to the American people that the Indian nationals who were tried at San Francisco were members of the Gaddar Party formed to overthrow the lawfully-established regime of the British in India, and that they were in league with the Germans and Indian revolutionaries. That the institution of proceedings against the Indian nationals in America was closely connected with British propaganda, can be discerned from the statement of George A. McGowen, Attorney for the defendants, when he declared in Court :

The whole case is being tried at the instigation of the British Government. The United States Government has never found anything seditious in the writings of these defendants.¹³

The following news item, published in *The New York Times*, amply illustrates how the American public was told of the danger to the British Empire from the agencies working from outside India :

12. *The New York Times*, February 28, 1918.

13. *Ibid.*, March 1, 1918.

"We have acquired a direct route in Russia, Persia and Afghanistan," says a dispatch from the Wolff Bureau, the German semi-official agency here today.

The announcement of the Wolff Bureau, if true, has an important bearing on the situation in Western Asia and possibly even in India. The peace terms forced upon Russia at Brest-Litovsk took away from Russia a district in the Cis-Caucasian region through which it would be possible for the German allies to gain entrance from the Black Sea or Turkey into Persia. Passage through Persia probably would meet with only nominal opposition, while a still further advance into Afghanistan would be possible.¹⁴

On hearing the introduction of the Rowlatt Bills in the Central Legislature, Gandhi declared his intention of meeting the situation with a campaign of *Satyagraha* if the recommendations should be embodied into an Act. At that time Gandhi was a new figure in Indian politics which he later came to dominate. The weapons of his life-long campaign were forged in his struggle for the amelioration of the lot of the Indians in South Africa, and ever since his stand on their behalf, he had commanded an abiding reverence among Indians of all creeds and castes. His selflessness, sincerity and readiness to oppose oppression in any form endeared him to the Indian masses. Believing in the supremacy of "Soul Force" over physical might, Gandhi was convinced that if the Bills were passed it would be his duty to employ against them the weapons of Passive Resistance or *Satyagraha*. His announcement to this effect was regarded with the utmost gravity by the Government as well as by many of the Indian politicians.

Gandhi toured the country to muster public opinion for the cause, and there was good response wherever he went. A new technique was evolved by the Mahatma; he inaugurated the movement with a fast for self-purification. Self-purification

14. *Ibid.*, March 9, 1918.

by fasting was, of course, quite in consonance with the traditional beliefs of the country, but to bring the idea into the domain of politics was not understood by his followers at first. Many asked, "What has purification to do with politics?" In this connection, the Mahatma has written in his autobiography :

But from the very beginning it seemed clear to me that the Sabha (the organization) was not likely to live long. I could see that already my emphasis on Truth and Ahimsa had begun to be disliked by some of its members.¹⁵

April 6th was fixed to be a day of *hartal* (ceasure of work), and the army of *Satyagrahis* was ordered to sharpen its weapon of "Soul Force" by fasting and prayer. Demonstrations were held all over the country on the same day, and the special feature was the spirit of fraternity between Hindus and Muslims. As a matter of fact, all sections of the people submerged their differences in order to fight against implementation of the hated Act. *The Bellman* took note of this fact and wrote :

One significant development in the Indian question has come home most forcefully to the British Government, and that is the fact that in the April demonstration, Hindus, Sikhs and Mohammedans acted together. The conclusion seems inescapable that the state of mutual and consistent antagonism between the several communities into which Indian people have always been divided can no longer be counted upon to lessen the difficulties of the British Government. This, however, viewed in its most hopeful sense, is only another surety for the success of the Indian adventure in self-government, once it is under way.¹⁶

15. *Mahatma Gandhi, His Own Story*, edited by C. F. Andrews, (New York : The MacMillan Company, 1930), p. 314.

16. XXVI (May 17, 1919), 540.

The Government, however, thought that

... this feeling sprang not so much from the provisions of the Bills themselves as from fear; first that the powers which the Bills conferred might be misused, and second that the very fact that the Bills were considered necessary constituted an index both to the genuine opinion of Government about Indian aspirations and to the strength of the resistance which Government would probably offer to their realization.¹⁷

On March 1st, Gandhi published a pledge to be taken by the *Satyagrahis* (the participants in the movement) which ran as follows :

Being conscientiously of the opinion that the Bills known as the Indian Criminal Law Amendment Bill No. 1 of 1919 and the Criminal Law Emergency Powers Bill No. 2 of 1919 are unjust, subversive of the principles of liberty and justice, and destructive of the elementary rights of an individual on which the safety of India as a whole and the State itself is based, we solemnly affirm that in the event of these Bills becoming law and until they are withdrawn, we refuse civilly to obey these laws and such other laws as the committee to be hereafter appointed may think fit, and we further affirm that in the struggle we will faithfully follow truth and refrain from violence to life, person or property.¹⁸

It was not difficult for Gandhi to mobilize public opinion behind him. The general discontent of the educated and illiterate classes alike, due to economic and other reasons, combined with the specific fears of the Mohammedan

17. *India in 1919*, a statement prepared for presentation to Parliament under the requirement of the Government of India Act (Calcutta): Government of India Central Publication Branch, 1920), p. 27.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

community¹⁹, were all, as it were, brought into focus against the single objective of the Rowlatt Act. Most people did not understand why Gandhi should have chosen the issue of the Rowlatt Bills for a show-down with the Government when there was before India the mammoth issue of self-government. Nevertheless, in spite of the sceptical attitude of some, there was good response to his call. To the educated class in general, the Act stood as the embodiment of past repression and future fear, as full confirmation of the apprehension that the Government would throw overboard the promises made in their hour of difficulty, and as proof unquestionable that henceforth the Government would inaugurate a regime of iron repression. The masses, on the other hand, identified the Act with their own sufferings after the war, due to the high prices of commodities. During the whole month of March, the Indian press was filled with reports of protest meetings and with articles and letters demonstrating the duty of the people to oppose the continuance of such Acts on the statute book of India.

Before Gandhi could launch his movement of *Satyagraha*, events took a serious turn in the Punjab, necessitating the suspension of the campaign. Punjab is the home of the martial races, particularly the Sikhs who were considered the backbone of the Indian Army, and now the scene of India's struggle and suffering shifted to that area. After the war, with a magnificent record of superior prowess and self-sacrifice in helping to defeat the highly disciplined troops of Germany, the Punjabis had undergone untold suffering and humiliation. The trouble started when Dr. Kitchlew, an advocate, and Dr. Satyapal, a medical practitioner, who were organizing the annual session of the Congress to be held at Amritsar, the Holy City of the Sikhs, were asked to appear before the District Magistrate. From the District Magistrate's house they were taken, on the morning of the 10th of April, 1919, to some unknown place. The report spread like wild fire, and a crowd of people gathered to inquire from the Magistrate as to the whereabouts of their

19. See Chapter IV.

leaders. The crowd was prevented from proceeding toward the Magistrate's house, and later they were fired upon by the troops. There were several casualties including one or two deaths. The people turned back in anger, carrying the dead and wounded, and on their way they set fire to a few Government buildings. Soon mob violence flared up, resulting in the death of five Englishmen. A missionary woman was jostled from her bicycle and received some injuries. The civil authorities turned over the town to the army, and the situation took a more serious turn.

The trouble did not remain confined to Amritsar. The infection spread to other places like Gujranwala, Kasur and Lahore, where mob violence resulted in a few deaths, the destruction of Government property and the cutting of telegraph wires. There were minor outbreaks at many other places, and the news of the happenings in the Punjab encouraged disturbances in other parts of India—particularly in Ahmedabad and Calcutta.

The situation in Amritsar soon became very serious. On the 13th of April, 1919 (the Hindu New Year Day), a large public meeting was held at a place called Jallianwala Bagh, an open ground in the midst of the city, enclosed on all sides by the walls of houses and with only one narrow entrance. When about twenty thousand men, women and children had gathered there for a meeting, Brigadier-General R.E.H. Dyer entered the place and, in his own words, "to make a wide impression on the element of discontent in the Punjab," ordered the troops to fire on the crowd. According to the official report, 400 persons were killed and about 1,500 were wounded in ten horrible minutes. The greater tragedy was that the wounded were left in the place overnight to die without care or attendance. This detail was later explained by General Dyer when he bluntly said, "That was not my job. There were hospitals."²⁰

According to his own version, given later before the Hunter Commission, General Dyer had first ordered the people to

20. Quoted from *The Literary Digest*, LXIV (January 24, 1920), 24.

disperse and then had ordered the firing. He admitted, however, that the troops began firing within two or three minutes of the order. It is reported that, in all, 1,600 rounds were fired and the firing stopped only when the ammunition ran out. Dyer's contention was that

.....The city having passed under the army, he had tom-tomed in the morning that no gatherings would be permitted, and as the people openly defied him, he wanted to teach them a lesson so that they might not laugh at him. He would have fired and fired longer, he said, if he had the required ammunition. He had only fired 1,600 rounds because his ammunition had run out. As a matter of fact, he said, he had taken an armoured car but found the passage to the Bagh would not admit it and so he left it behind.²¹

Justice Rankin, a member of the Hunter Committee, asked, "Excuse me putting it this way, General, but was it not a form of frightfulness?" General Dyer :

No, it was not. It was a horrible duty I had to perform. I think it was a merciful thing. I thought that I should shoot well and shoot strong, so that I or anybody else should not have to shoot again. I think it is quite possible I could have dispersed the crowd without firing, but they would have come back again and laughed, and I should have made what I consider to be a fool of myself.²²

General Dyer's action was immediately approved by the Governor of the Punjab.

The regime of General Dyer was responsible for untold suffering to the people of Amritsar. The water and electric

21. Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *History of the Indian National Congress* (Bombay : Padma Publications, 1946), p. 105.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 165.

supplies were out off. Public flogging was common. Besides this and the wholesale shooting of persons suspected to be seditionists, all Indians passing along the street where the English woman had been knocked down from her cycle were made to crawl on their bellies. Questioned about the crawling order and the reason for issuing it, General Dyer explained that women had been brutally assaulted, and added :

We look upon women as sacred. I searched in my mind for a form of punishment that would meet this action. I did not know how to meet it. I felt the street should be looked upon as sacred, and said no Indians shall pass along here and if they have to pass they must do so on all fours. It never entered my mind that any man in his senses would voluntarily go through that street.²³

Apart from the humiliation of having to crawl in the streets of their own land, the order entailed great inconvenience and hardship for those peace-loving people who had their houses facing the street and with no back entrances.

According to the official report contained in the White Paper issued to Parliament, the administration of Martial Law was more intensive in Lahore than anywhere else. The Curfew Order was immediately put in force and people found outside their houses after 8 p.m. were liable to be shot, flogged, fined, imprisoned or otherwise punished. Occupiers of premises on whose walls Martial Law notices were posted were ordered to protect them, and were liable to punishment if in any way they were defaced or torn, although they could not stay all night to watch them. The official historian of the Congress wrote :

More than two persons abreast were not allowed on the side-walks. Students of colleges were ordered to

23. *The Literary Digest*, LXIV (June 24, 1920), 25.

report themselves four times a day to military authorities at varying places of assembly. *Langars*, or public food kitchens, which had been opened by philanthropic persons for the feeding of those who could not purchase food, were ordered to be closed down ; motor cars and motor bicycles belonging to Indians were ordered to be delivered up to the military authorities and were handed over to officials for their use. Electric *pankhas* (fans) and other electric fittings belonging to Indians were commandeered and stripped from their houses for the use of British soldiers. Public conveyances were ordered to report themselves daily at places a considerable distance from the city.

Colonel Johnson admitted that many of his orders were directed against the educated and professional classes, lawyers, etc. He considered they were the classes from which the political agitators were drawn.

Students, boys of 16 to 20, were the objects of special attention. The students of several colleges in Lahore, which is a large University town, were ordered to report themselves four times a day at a place, in one case four miles distant from their college. In the burning sun of Lahore in April, the hottest time of the year, when the temperature is often over 108 in the shade, these youths had to walk 19 miles a day. Some of them fainted by the wayside. Colonel Johnson thought it did them good, it kept them out of mischief. A Martial Law notice was torn from one of the walls on one college. The whole professional staff, including the Principal, were arrested, and marched under military escort to the Fort, where they were kept in military custody for three days. They were given "a corner of the Fort" for their accommodation and allowed to sleep on the roof.....

Colonel Johnson, however, was quite pleased with what he did in this respect, and the Europeans of Lahore entertained him at a farewell dinner and lauded!

him as the "protector of the poor"—the poor people who suffered a six weeks' agony under his rule.²⁴

The above quotation portrays amply and accurately the situation in the Punjab during those troubled days.

The utter helplessness of the people could be further ascertained from the evidence of Major Corbey of the Royal Air Force, from which the following extract is taken :

The crowd was running away and he [Corbey] fired to disperse them. As the crowd dispersed, he fired the machine gun into the village itself. He supposed some shots hit the houses. He could make no discrimination between the innocent and the guilty. He was at a height of 200 feet and could see perfectly what he was doing. His object was not accomplished by the dropping of bombs alone.

The firing was not intended to do damage alone. It was in the interests of the villagers themselves. By killing a few, he thought he would prevent the people from collecting again. This had a moral effect.

After that he went over the city, dropping bombs, and fired at the people who were trying to get away.²⁵

The Government of India imposed strong censorship on news from the Punjab and a rigid regulation of ingress and egress of people to and from the affected areas. To say nothing of England and America, even the other parts of India were unaware for months of the happenings in the Punjab. Full disclosure began only with the opening of an inquiry at Lahore on November 11, 1919, by a Committee headed by Lord Hunter. It was when the British Press started commenting on the events in the Punjab that the news finally reached America.

24. Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 168.

Regarding the paucity of news in the American press, *The Independent* and *the Weekly Review* commented :

For the last five years India has been a sealed book. The British censorship has been so strict that wars of more than minor importance and political disturbances involving millions of natives have not become known to the outside world in any detail until long afterwards. For instance, it is only now that we are beginning to get full information of riots at Amritsar last April.²⁶

Full details of the Punjab happenings no doubt reached the United States later, but some news did appear in the press about the middle of 1919 to the effect that there were severe disturbances in the Punjab and that the Government was doing all in its power to suppress them. Most of the news, however, was confined to journals and periodicals. With the exception of *The Christian Science Monitor*, which published a leader on the subject a year later, the daily press failed to make editorial comment one way or the other, and very few papers gave any appreciable space to the news itself. Perhaps this was due to the fact that the news was old when it reached America, and not likely to cause any great concern to readers. When the facts of the disturbance came to be known, wide publicity was given by certain magazines and periodicals which were interested in Indian affairs, but in proportion to the magnitude and horror of the happenings, the notice taken by the press was negligible.

The few opinions which found voice were divided. Some condemned General Dyer's action; others gave him credit for saving the Empire. Bernard Houghton was of the former view; he remarked :

Never before, except in Ireland, has the British name been sullied by a crime so black. Other, if minor,

26. *The Independent and the Weekly Review*, CI (January 3, 1920), 26.

atrocities followed elsewhere in the Punjab, where for a time there ruled a reign of terror. The Indian Government not only condoned all these atrocities, but it suppressed by every means in its power a knowledge of the facts. When, against its will, the Hunter Commission—an inadequate and partial Commission—was sent out to inquire, it hastened to pass an act of indemnity to shield the perpetrators.²⁷

Mr. H. M. Hyndman was even more critical of the British Government when he said :

It is quite right to denounce assassinations; anarchy is no remedy for misgovernment. But when public meetings are not allowed; when freedom of the Press is entirely abrogated; when men are arrested, imprisoned or transported to a criminal colony under an obsolete but resuscitated law a century old without trial and even without accusation; when young students are publicly flogged by an infamous person for purely political offences—when all these things are done by a foreign Government which has disarmed the whole people and allows them no direct representation whatever—it is impossible not to recognize that these anarchist outbreaks have been deliberately provoked.²⁸

No less critical of General Dyer's action was Helena Normanton when she remarked :

That a British General could pitilessly exhaust his ammunition upon thousands of unarmed and unwarned Indians squatting upon the ground at an open-air meeting, leaving the dead unburied and the dying unattended, and forbid for a number of hours even their

27. Bernard Houghton, "Reforms in India", *Political Science Quarterly*, XXXV (December 20, 1920), 549.

28. "Unrest in India and a Remedy," *Asia*, XIX (July 1919), 669.

removal by means of a Curfew Order, is something new to civilization.²⁹

Writers with liberal views were very critical of the British Government, and so was the liberal Press. *Current Opinion* observed:

India is held down by bayonets despite the optimistic observations of Mr. Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, in the Commons.³⁰

Of all the periodicals, *The Literary Digest* took the most interest in the Punjab disturbances and published articles and comments in more than one issue. It quoted at length from the British press, but never expressed its own opinion beyond giving some accounts of the events which were based, as a rule, on either British press observations or the statements of British officials. For example, under the heading "Riotous Passive Resistance in India," it wrote:

According to reports from the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, the worst trouble has been at Amritsar, where it is said that three British Bank Managers were burned to death, one of whom apparently was clubbed before he was burned.³¹

Of the hundreds of American dailies, only two—the *Springfield Daily Republican* and *The Christian Science Monitor*—carried worthy comment. The former, disapproving of the action of the British Government in continuing Martial Law, remarked rather mildly:

Only by winning the consent of the governed, upon which British rule has mainly rested in the past, can

29. "White Washing British Rule in India," *The Nation*, CX (June 19, 1920), 83.

30. *Current Opinion*, LXVI (June 1919), 350.

31. Issue No. LXI (May 10, 1919), 23.

the Empire either be justified or made lasting. Harsh and autocratic measures may be necessary in a crisis, but their continuance after the crisis has passed would bring disaster.³²

The Christian Science Monitor, on the other hand, considered the action of General Dyer as "frankly and admittedly terrorism."³³ It further observed that exemplary punishment meted out to a criminal duly tried and found guilty, was one thing and had frequently been resorted to in India, notably during the Mutiny, but the wholesale slaughter of large numbers of people who, at the worst, had been guilty of a purely technical offence, for the purpose of producing a moral effect, was quite another. In conclusion it said:

Let it be, at once, and gladly, admitted that General Dyer is all that his friends claim for him, a worthy soldier with over thirty years' unblemished service to his credit; that he was placed in a position of extreme difficulty, and that drastic action was necessary. None of these things, however, alters the fact that organized shooting at Amritsar was the expression of a policy which is utterly and entirely inadmissible. The condemnation of such a policy cannot be too definite nor too final.³⁴

The press in England was greatly alarmed by the appalling news of the disturbances in the Punjab. The Liberal press sternly censored General Dyer's action and the attitude of the Punjab authorities. In the view of some severe British critics, the General had made a wide impression, not only in the Punjab but also throughout the world, an impression which must be removed at all cost if the credit and honour of Great Britain were not to be fatally impaired. On the other hand, certain

32. Issue dated December 23, 1919.

33. Issue dated July 12, 1920.

34. *Ibid.*

Conservative papers lauded the action of General Dyer and painted him as a national hero. They gave credit to him and the other British civil and military officials for having saved northern India from a danger comparable only to the Indian Mutiny. *The Literary Digest* remarked :

But even these defenders of the strong hand at Amritsar regret that the British public was not allowed to know at the time all that happened in the Punjab.“All humane men deplore such a loss of life as occurred at Amritsar,” remarked *The Morning Post*, but all men of sense agree that it is a mere trifle compared with the loss of life which must certainly have occurred if those heroic men had not done as they did--and as we hope Englishmen will continue to do in similar circumstances.³⁵

The Manchester Guardian believed that the public should wait for the report of Lord Hunter's Commission before judging the extent and seriousness of the disturbances, and averred :

It may be said at once that few more dreadful incidents can be found in the history of British rule in India than the story of their suppression. The appalling story of the shootings at Amritsar reads as though a mad man had been let loose to massacre at large.³⁶

A number of papers in London censored the action of the Government, as is apparent from the following quotation printed in *The Literary Digest* :

Various other journals defer final judgment until the conclusions of Lord Hunter's Committee are made known, and among them is *the London Times* which remarks, however, that on his own showing General

35. No. LXIV (January 24, 1920), 24.

36. Quoted in *The Literary Digest*, LXIV (January 24, 1920), 25..

Dyer's conduct "appears to us indefensible, and its worst feature is that he did not stop firing when the crowd began instantly to disperse." The public is shocked by these revelations, the *Times* continues, but it is shocked also because "disclosure has only been made in Great Britain nine months after the event occurred." It was innocently assumed in England, observes *The London Daily News*, that when the armistice was signed the reign of frightfulness was over. That assumption was wrong, and it adds : "The scene of this new frightfulness is not Belgium, but India ; the general responsible is not German, but British. The Government which has practised this concealment—in its way one of the most shocking features of the whole concern—is British. The victims are not even technically enemies, but 'rebels,' in General Dyer's words ; that is to say, British subjects who innocently or otherwise ventured to act in contravention of his decrees. We do not ignore the gravity of the crimes previously committed.....we do not forget the difficulty and delicacy of the position. It is just to remember, moreover, that the case is in a sense *sub judice*, and that the final conclusions of the Commission of Inquiry may to some extent modify the story as we know it at present. We hope profoundly that it will, for what could be more futile than to talk of Indian reforms, of 'self-government for India,' of Indian government as a trust held by the British Parliament and people if wholesale massacres could be perpetrated without the British Parliament or people knowing a word about them for months ?" The appalling news from Amritsar is a revelation to the British people of what their rule in India might have come to but for the change of course set up by the measure of self-government now passing into law, according to the London *Westminster Gazette*, which continues : "Whatever may have been the impression made in the Punjab, this amazing narrative will recall to the inhabitants of the United Kingdom chiefly the episodes of the early German occupation of Belgium and the old 'Peterloo Massacre' in England.....Not the

least astonishing thing of all is that such an episode did not precipitate a real rebellion.”³⁷

One may ask—why did the riots break out in India at the beginning of 1919? Several explanations, official and otherwise, were offered. The British people, for instance, were told that the passage of the Rowlatt Act against the warnings of the Indians, had been seized upon by the agitators as an excuse for inaugurating an anti-British movement, and that since the Act was designed solely to deal with anarchical and revolutionary conspiracies, it could have caused no terror to law-abiding citizens. The Government of India, in its annual report to Parliament, similarly maintained :

The publication of Mr. Gandhi's pledge, coupled with the vehement denouncement of the Rowlatt Bills delivered in the Indian Council by non-official members, laid the foundations of agitation so intensive as to be without parallel in recent years.³⁸

The British public was further informed that Indian malcontents were successful in fermenting trouble because there existed in India much unrest owing to the abnormal rise in prices, the acute shortage of food, the ravages caused by influenza, the hardships incidental upon recruiting, the war in general, and the approaching dissolution of the Turkish Empire. The people in England were also fed upon the idea that the riots were the outcome of the Passive Resistance Movement started by Gandhi to combat the Rowlatt Act.

Besides the foregoing reasons, the widest possible publicity was given through the British press to the theory that the gravity of the Indian situation could be ascribed to the nefarious

37. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

38. *India in 1919*, being a statement prepared for presentation to Parliament under the requirement of the Government of India Act, (Calcutta: Government of India Central Publications Branch, 1920), p. 30.

work secretly carried on by German, Turkish and Bolshevik agents.

The propaganda carried on in the British press found echo, albeit a slight echo, in America. *The New York Times* of July 1919 published on its front page the news that the Germans were inspiring new plots in the East, and that under the guidance of German agents, Moslems and Hindus had formed a new secret organization in Switzerland. The story ran :

Under the name of Oriental League, there has recently been established at Berne a central organization uniting all the various secret societies of Moslem and Hindu nationalists in Europe which have hitherto acted independently. The aim of the new association is to prepare for joint revolutionary action in Asia and Africa after the definite conclusion of peace . . . Evidence exists that recent insurrections in Egypt, the sudden attacks of the Afghans and the rising in India, remarkable for cooperation between Moslems and Hindus, were connected with the activities of the League.³⁹

The same paper again commented editorially on the Russian menace to India. "Trotsky is making good his threat of carrying war towards India,"⁴⁰ it said.

A few correspondents and columnists strayed from these orthodox explanations to the extent of hinting that the delay in giving effect to the British promises for reforms and the persistent and noisy propaganda that persons opposed to the reforms had carried on in Britain and India, had undermined Indian faith in British goodwill and had caused unrest which was likely to explode at the slightest provocation.

But all the reasons and explanations provided by British spokesmen were not likely to convince those fully acquainted

39. *The New York Times*, July 3, 1919.

40. *Ibid.*, January 12, 1920.

with the situation in India, as would be evident from the eloquent reasoning of St. Nihal Singh, a prominent journalist of the day, who wrote :

Some of these explanations cannot be lightly dismissed, but all put together, they do not reveal the root cause of the trouble and therefore lead us nowhere. They set thinking persons wondering if Indians are really so bereft of common sense and political acumen that, after having remained staunch during the darkest hours of the war when the fate of the Empire hung in the balance, they should begin to play into the hands of the enemy when Britain stands triumphant, Germany and Turkey have been brought to their knees and Russia is reduced to chaos—and, moreover, when British statesmen are devising measures to advance India towards responsible self-government. On the very face of it, that suggestion is so preposterous that anyone who knows aught of educated Indians will dismiss it as unthinkable.⁴¹

In America also, some kind of speculation was indulged in concerning the main causes of the unrest in India and the consequent disturbances in the Punjab. But all these reasons and explanations appear to have emerged from British sources. This should not be attributed to the lack of independent judgment by the individual writer in America or by the American press at large, but to the lack of unbiased material from which to draw independent conclusions. Since the American press had to depend on British-controlled news sources for almost all its Indian news, and considering the well-distributed and plentiful propaganda to the effect that India was seething with revolt in spite of Britain's promise of self-government in the near future, and that the hands of German and Soviet agents were behind the volatile youth of India, one could expect that the opinions

41. *The Contemporary Review* (London), CXV (June 1919), 625.

of the American press would fall in line with the British point of view. Some sections drew their opinions entirely from official statements emanating from London and Delhi.

It is not surprising, then, that *The Literary Digest* should remark :

Bloodshed and pillage in many parts of India as the result of "passive resistance" would perhaps seem a ridiculous inconsistency if the conditions were not so grave. Officials of the British Government have discovered a direct connection between the Bolsheviki of Russia and the disturbing elements in the Punjab, in consequence of which six Russians—apparently of the better class, well-educated and speaking several different Indian dialects—were arrested in this part of India and jailed.⁴²

The Christian Science Monitor attributed the unrest to the seditious propaganda made by the anarchist agents dressed in the garb of Sadhus (holy men) who, according to this paper, were noticed moving about from village to village spreading the wildest stories amongst a peculiarly credulous people and telling them that the police and local authorities were to have absolutely unfettered powers conferred upon them, that no meeting of any kind—whether religious or political—would be tolerated, that if two or three were seen walking together they would be at once arrested, that the Government intended to commandeer the whole of the crops and was determined to adopt a system of most ruthless repression. It continued :

The latest information on the subject shows quite clearly that the authorities had been aware, for many months previous to the outbreak, that this propaganda was being carried on. Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the retiring Lieutenant-Governor, in the course of his farewell speech practically intimated as much and,

42. Issue No. LXI (May 10, 1919), 22.

whilst all the necessary military and police precautions were taken, no attempt appears to have been made to counteract the movement with a propaganda setting forth the facts of the case.⁴³

The same paper commented editorially more than once, and consistently maintained, though taking due note of Mr. Montagu's explanation in the House of Commons, that the real cause of the unrest in India was propaganda. A serious food shortage, recruitment for the army which had resulted in some places in many families being deprived of their bread-winners, sundry perplexities amongst the Mohammadans arising out of the defeat of Turkey, a feeling (due to activities in certain Anglo-Indian quarters) that the reforms promised by the British Government on August 10, 1917, would not be carried out in a form really acceptable to India, and, above all, a widespread antagonism to the Rowlatt Act, were the causes given by the Secretary of State for India to the House of Commons. In the opinion of journal, however, all these were only contributory causes. In an editorial it remarked :

Nevertheless, the fact remains that as a general rule, traced to its ultimate source, it (the unrest) is never found to have its beginnings in any great fundamental need or fundamental desire among the people, but it springs from the wild notions and impossible aspirations imposed upon the most impressionable class, namely, the young students and even the schoolboys, by the "real revolutionary," the man who lurks in dark corners and takes care never to appear in person.⁴⁴

The Springfield Daily Republican stated :

India too was called upon for great sacrifices, and little reciprocity was shown. Moreover, the shocking

43. July 1, 1919.

44. *Ibid.*, November 10, 1919.

incompetence of the Indian military authorities as shown in the Tigris campaign for Baghdad, did much to discredit the British rule; an overlord should at least be efficient. Nor have the political reforms expected been forthcoming, and the continuation in peace of the wartime sedition laws has caused much illwill.⁴⁵

The Bellman, on the other hand, did not indulge in any kind of speculation and was very sceptical. It said:

In view of this promising and unquestionably earnest programme (referring to the 1919 Reforms) it is difficult to understand the recent disturbances in India, which were of an extent and virulence not easy to minimize.⁴⁶

Some journalists who wrote on Indian problems quite frequently, held more or less the same view, but Mr. Hyndman thought differently when he commented:

Here the unrest was the direct effect of terrible economic injustice. Solemn official promises made to the cultivators in regard to taxation were deliberately broken in a manner absolutely ruinous to the ryots. Excessive charges were made for all irrigation water supplied by the Government in order that the capital sunk in the official enterprise might show a profit. The poor folk were prohibited from using water from their own wells so that they would be driven to buy Government water. No attention whatever was paid to the complaints of the ryots or of their leaders.⁴⁷

The outbreak of violence in the Punjab and Ahmedabad, following the Passive Resistance Movement started by Gandhi

45. December 23, 1919.

46. XXVI (May 17, 1919), 540.

47. "Unrest in India and a Remedy," *Asia*, XIX (July 1919), 65.

against the Rowlatt Act, gave a great shock to the Mahatma. He confessed that he had made a "Himalayan blunder" in calling for a non-violent revolt before the people were trained and ready for it. In his autobiography he explains in considerable detail just what the "Himalayan blunder" was, for he found that his confession had brought down upon no small amount of ridicule which, however, left him unmoved. Gandhi arrived at his conclusions by a process of thinking peculiar to his way of life, and since his personality had a dominant influence on the political life of India, it might be well to quote from his autobiography a passage which helps the layman to understand his manner of reasoning:

Before one can be fit for the practice of civil disobedience, one should have rendered a willing and respectful obedience to the State Laws. For the most part, people obey such laws, for fear of the penalty for their breach, and that holds good particularly in respect of such laws as do not involve a moral principle.... A *Satyagrahi* obeys the laws of society intelligently because he considers it to be his sacred duty to do so. It is only when a person has thus obeyed the laws of society scrupulously that he is in a position to judge as to which particular rules are good and just and which unjust and iniquitous. Only then does the right accrue to him to undertake civil disobedience of certain laws in well defined circumstances. My error lay in my failure to observe this necessary limitation. I had called upon the people to launch upon civil disobedience before they had thus qualified themselves for it, and this mistake of mine seemed to me to be of a Himalayan magnitude.⁴⁸

After making a public declaration of his miscalculation in appraising the situation before launching his Passive Resistance

48. *Mahatma Gandhi, His Own Story*, edited by C. F. Andrews, (New York : MacMillan Co., 1930), p. 330.

Movement, Gandhi declared his readiness to assist the Government in every possible way to restore normal conditions, and announced the suspension of Passive Resistance. On the 21st of July, 1919, the Associated Press of India published a statement by Mahatma Gandhi which read :

I have, after deep consideration, decided not to resume civil resistance for the time being....indeed, my acceptance of the Government's advice is a further demonstration of the nature of civil resistance. A civil resister never seeks to embarrass the Government. I feel that I shall better serve the country and the Government and those Punjabi leaders who, in my opinion, have been so unjustly convicted and so cruelly sentenced, by the suspension of civil resistance for the time being.⁴⁹

As soon as martial law was withdrawn from the affected areas in the Punjab, the Congress decided to start an independent inquiry into the Punjab occurrences and to take all necessary legal proceedings in India or in England in relation thereto. At this time, a Joint Parliamentary Committee of both Houses of Parliament, under the chairmanship of Lord Selborne, was sitting in England to examine the Bill embodying the scheme proposed by the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, and was hearing persons representing various shades of opinion. The Congress sent a deputation to England not only to press upon Parliament and the Joint Select Committee its point of view with regard to the forthcoming 'Reforms, but to disseminate, by a nation-wide campaign, the truth about the oppressions in the Punjab.

The demand for a commission of inquiry into the Punjab disturbances was taken up with great vehemence by the press as well as the leaders of public opinion. Within ten days after the violent upheaval in the Punjab, the All-India Congress Committee

49. Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

met at Bombay. After condemning all acts of violence, the Committee urged the Government to deal sympathetically with the situation by abandoning its policy of repression and appointing a commission of inquiry into the cause of discontent and the charges of excesses brought by the local authorities against the population. In the last week of May 1919, Montagu announced in the House of Commons that the Viceroy had recognized the necessity of such an inquiry. Consequently, in a speech before the Legislative Council on September 5th, the Viceroy announced the personnel of the Commission, to be known as the Hunter Commission; it was to consist of six members, to which two more were added later. Of the final eight members, six were Englishmen and two Indians.

The first public session of the Hunter Commission was held in Delhi in the beginning of November, 1919, and it subsequently proceeded to Lahore. Then, when the evidence before the Commission began to filter through, the interest of the entire British press was turned with dramatic suddenness towards the Amritsar massacres.

When the Hunter Commission's inquiry began, the All-India Congress Committee pleaded before the Viceroy for the release of the Punjab leaders and all others who had been put in jail without trial, in order that their evidence might be submitted before the Commission and the official witnesses examined by the Congress. This the Government of India refused to do. Thereupon, the Indian National Congress declared a boycott of the official inquiry, refusing to co-operate with it by withholding the great mass of evidence in its possession. The Congress instituted an independent inquiry and produced a voluminous report covering about a thousand pages. The report was vehement in its criticism of the policy of the Punjab Government and in its handling of the disturbances. It considered the Amritsar massacre as a calculated piece of inhumanity towards utterly innocent and unarmed men, women and children, and unparalleled in its ferocity in the history of modern British administration. Among other

things, it urged the Government of India to repeal the Rowlatt Act, recall Sir M. O'Dwyer, Governor of the Punjab and declare him ineligible for any responsible office under the Crown, relieve General Dyer and punish other officials responsible for the inhuman treatment of the population, recall the Viceroy, refund the fines collected from people who were convicted by the special tribunals and summary courts.

On the other side, the British Government made public the findings of the Hunter Commission. The report was issued in a volume of two hundred pages and dealt with all the events in the Punjab from March to August with details of each disturbance and damage to property. The members of the Commission broadly agreed in their views of the outstanding causes of the principal events leading to the outbreak. They considered the Civil Disobedience Movement of Gandhi responsible for undermining the law-abiding instincts of the people at a time when those instincts were strained to the utmost by economic distress, war-weariness, anxiety as to the political future of India, apprehensions as to the Turkish peace terms and agitation as to the policy of the Government in pressing forward and enacting the Rowlatt Act.

With the exception of the firing at Amritsar and certain minor incidents, the members generally agreed in justifying the firing done by the police and the military. They agreed in pronouncing unfavourably on General Dyer's handling of the situation at Amritsar and upon certain of the orders passed in the course of the administration of martial law.

Besides the agreement by both English and Indian members on the general aspect of the situation, they differed on many points—particularly in their conclusions as to the precise nature of the disorders and to the wisdom of introducing and continuing martial law. The English members considered these disturbances as open rebellion, as they felt that the rioters had attempted to paralyse the administration of the Government by extensive destruction of Government property and means of communication.

The publication of the report of the Hunter Commission

went almost unnoticed in the American press, chiefly because so much time had elapsed between the actual occurrences and the publication of the report. But those who did take note of it were very severe in their criticism. Helena Normanton commented in *The Nation* :

The report is a disgrace to the signatories and a deeper blot on the name of Britain. The crimes were committed in hot blood. The report is the product of eight men icy in their callousness.⁵⁰

Bernard Houghton believed that the report of the Hunter Commission, the Dyer debates in the House of Commons, and still more the support of General Dyer by the great majority of the white population in India, had grave significance. He further believed that the Indians had beheld—as by a lightning flash—the real minds of those who ruled them and their sympathisers in Britain. Summing up his reaction, he said :

The report is looked on as so much whitewash. Confidence in British justice is weakened ; further the goodwill of Simla is destroyed; and a wall of hatred set up between the races.⁵¹

The Nation was equally critical when it commented that the striking thing about the Hunter Report was not its cold-blooded detachment or its mild depreciation of the massacre ; almost all reports of almost all Committees were, as a rule, cold-blooded, and detachment was often their one virtue ; but the feature of the Hunter Report which stirred deep doubts in a mind untouched by the virtues of imperialism, was its calm assumption:

50. "White Washing British Rule in India," *The Nation*, CX (June 19, 1920), 831.

51. "Reforms in India," *Political Science Quarterly*, XXXV (December 20, 1920), 552.

that British troops in India would have the permanent right to maintain by force British rule and British order, even if every Indian died in the process. It concluded :

Of course, says the report in effect, bombing villages from airplanes sometimes results in the death of innocent persons, and this is deplorable; but in general, it is a method we feel called upon to approve. Of course, if people assembled in an illegal gathering refuse to disperse they must be fired upon, but it is worthwhile even at the expense of several seconds' time to order them to disperse before killing them. Thus have argued tyrants and their apologists in all ages. When the Czar shot down hundreds of peaceful petitioners "illegally assembled" before the Winter Palace in January 1905, he doubtless argued as the Hunter Commission argues with regard to Amritsar. When the Germans dropped bombs on British babies in English villages they doubtless urged the same necessity that forces English airmen to drop bombs on Indian babies in defenseless villages in the Punjab. The history of atrocity and the history of autocratic military rule are one and the same. And the nation which builds that sort of history, be it Russian or German or British or American, is doomed to the horror of war with its neighbours and to rebellion at home.⁵²

52. *The Nation*, CX (June 19, 1920), 814.

Reforms and Unrest

The annual session of the Indian National Congress for the year 1919 met at Amritsar and was presided over by Pandit Motilal Nehru whose son was to become Free India's first Prime Minister. The year had witnessed foreign repression at its worst, and naturally enough the atmosphere at the session was overcast with gloom. The presidential address dealt chiefly with the happenings of the year.

Apart from the unanimity of opinion among the delegates with respect to the Punjab disturbances, the Indian politicians were sharply divided on the Reform issue. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Mahatma Gandhi wanted to work the Reforms on the basis of offering cooperation in proportion to the measure in which the Government cooperated with the people. Mr. C. R. Das and his group, on the other hand, stood strongly for the rejection of the scheme. The session dispersed after having passed fifty resolutions which embraced a wide variety of topics ranging from a demand for the recall of the Viceroy to a proposal for an inquiry into the land revenue system, labour conditions and the woes of the third class railway passengers. Many considered this session a triumph for Gandhi, for he had made a strong impression on the Congress with his personality, his philosophy, his code of ethics and his cult of truth and non-violence.

The close of the session also marked the end of 1919 with its tumult and sufferings, and the new year, bringing with it the birth of Gandhi's Non-Cooperation Movement, was welcomed with high hopes.

Although the Punjab atrocities of April 1919 were, to a considerable extent, responsible for the unrest throughout India, the trouble had a long history and a multitude of aspects. From the beginning of the twenties, however, it manifested itself in two main issues—the Khilafat movement and the Reforms. The general state of the Indian mind at that time was one of suspense and anxiety. The terms of the European peace, so far as Turkey was concerned, had not yet been decided, and the delay had afforded ample time for the development of a formidable agitation which demanded the restoration of the Sultan of Turkey, Khalif of Islam, to his pre-war position. The movement gained strength and confidence from the obvious hesitancy of the Allies to grapple with the Turkish problem. It was openly preached that loyalty to religion took precedence over loyalty to the Government, that supporting the Allies against the Turks had been a grave error and sin, and that if the Mohammedan demands on behalf of Turkey were not met, the Government could hardly count on the loyalty of its seventy million Mohammedan subjects. The Hunter Commission, which had been appointed to inquire into the Punjab atrocities, had not yet published its findings, and the Hindu community was anxiously awaiting the Government's decision.

There was tension everywhere, but still it was recognized that the time for action had not come. The royal proclamation granting amnesty to political prisoners did not inspire confidence in the hearts of the people, in spite of the sweet language used. Popular confidence in Britain had reached its lowest ebb. One need not seek far to discover the reason for this unhappy state. The breach of faith in the treaty imposed on Turkey; the failure to redress the Punjab outrages; the language used by many Englishmen both in India and in England, and especially in the Houses of Parliament, concerning those outrages; the intention of the Government of India,

manifest in the rules framed under the Act, retaining as far as possible all powers in the hands of the officials ; the nomination of civilians to four out of five new governorships and as presidents of all the Councils—all this had completely shattered the faith of most Indians in British justice.

In spite of the prominence given to the Khilafat issue by Gandhi and other leaders, the question of the Reforms was undoubtedly of vital importance. Different sections of the people viewed the question in different lights. To the Englishmen in India, the Reforms, coupled with the promise of ultimate self-government, were considered too generous—so much so that they caused great concern among the British who were alarmed at the threatened Indianization of the Civil Services and the eventual transfer of control of the Government to the Indians themselves.

In England one could discern three schools of thought regarding the Reforms. One wished to treat India as a conquered country ; it was quite violently opposed to any constitutional reforms and considered the pronouncement of Mr. Montagu and the consequent Reforms a dangerous innovation. These were the die-hards and the Conservatives. The second school wished the Indians to manage their own affairs but thought they were not yet capable of doing so ; therefore, they wanted India to attain self-government gradually, and considered the Reforms of 1919 as the first step in that direction. The third school, which was in the minority and had little influence, believed that the time had come for making India a partner with England.

To Indians, the Reforms were disappointing in spite of the fact that some of the leaders of public opinion were willing to accept them. Most of the people maintained that the scheme enfranchised only about 1.5% of the population on a property basis and women and labour did not get votes as such. Besides, it set up second chambers largely representative of vested interests and far more reactionary than the House of Lords in England, with official and nominated majorities for the express purpose of thwarting the popular will. The

most glaring defect, they discovered, was that the power of the purse with some unimportant exceptions was still vested in the hands of an irresponsible bureaucracy. And lastly, the Reforms failed to inspire any enthusiasm because they introduced into the Government the system of dyarchy, unheard of in history, unsupported by any precedent and insupportable on any theory of constitutional Government—a system under which the Cabinets of the Governors of the Provinces were to be composed of two elements: first, the Executive Councillors, nominated Government officials in charge of all the important portfolios such as Home, Finance, Law and Order; and second, the other Ministers, chosen from the elected element of the House, in charge of what were known as the “Nation Building Departments” such as Public Health and Education.

In America, reaction to the Reforms was also varied. It must be remembered that the majority of the people in the United States knew little or nothing about Indian problems, nor did they very much care to learn. But by outlook and temperament, the approach and propensity of mind of the people in general were closely akin to the views and sentiments of the more progressive and enlightened section. Espousing the cause of and giving their moral support to peoples struggling for emancipation, has always been in the best tradition of the American people, so it is not surprising that a considerable section of progressive public opinion in the United States sympathized with the political aspirations of the Indians. Having been under British domination themselves and having won their freedom only after a violent struggle, Americans were in a better position to appreciate the hopes and fears of those who were struggling for freedom in India. George Washington had said, “My sympathetic feelings and my best wishes are irresistibly excited whenever in any country I see an oppressed nation unfurl the banner of freedom.”¹ The same sentiment was expressed by Abraham Lincoln in many of his speeches, and by innumerable

1. Dr. J. T. Sunderland, *The Truth About India*, (New York, Lewis Copeland Co., 1930), p. 13.

other national heroes, for Americans are and always have been a freedom-loving people. When the South American nations were engaged in their struggle to throw off the yoke of Spain, sympathy for them in the United States was tremendous, and America was the first nation to recognize the new Republics. Again, when Greece was struggling against Turkey for freedom in 1822, President Monroe in his annual message to Congress expressed in strong language his own sympathy and that of the American people. Throughout Hungary's famous struggle for independence in 1849, the goodwill of the American people was with her. More than one speech has been delivered in the United States Congress condemning British rule in India, and resolutions expressing sympathy with her struggle for freedom and pledging moral support were introduced in the House of Representatives and in the Senate. The sentiments of the American people were clearly demonstrated in the following Christmas message of 1921 which appeared in the *New York Times*, signed by a number of American officials and publicists²:

The United States of America has never failed to extend sympathy and support to all peoples who were struggling for freedom.

A short time ago our army returned from overseas after having brought victory to the Allied cause. Our entry into this great struggle was predicated upon the principle that the just powers of Government are derived from the consent of the governed; and our aid was accepted by the Allies upon the theory that at the

2. Among the signatories were Senators David L. Walsh of Massachusetts and George W. Norris of Nebraska; Representatives William J. Burke of Pa.; Edward F. Dunne, ex-Governor of Ill.; Chas P. Gillen, ex-Mayor of Newark; Patrick Griffen, Mayor of Hoboken, N.J.; Frank L. Hague, Mayor of Jersey City, N.J.; Reverend John Haynes Holmes of the Community Church, New York; Basil M. Manley, former Joint Chairman of the War Labor Board; Justice James F. Minturn of the Supreme Court of New Jersey, Hoboken.

close of the war peoples everywhere should be permitted to determine for themselves the character of Government under which they shall live. Our right not only to sympathize with the people of India and Ireland and Egypt who are struggling for the right of self-determination, but to give them active support, is conceded by the promises of our associates in the great war and sealed by the blood of our soldiers.

Accordingly we send our sympathy to the people of India, and our assurance that we will do all we may to promote the success of their struggle.³

Liberal public opinion in America, with its progressive and enlightened views on the aspirations of India, was always critical, on principle, of the British domination and, as instanced above, did not hesitate to give expression to its sentiments. British propaganda failed to impress it. It shared the views of the nationalist leaders who maintained that if self-determination, as was proclaimed by Allied statesmen during the World War, and as was given effect to in part by the treaties of peace in the political and territorial resettlement of Europe, meant anything at all, it included the right to self-government. That three hundred and nineteen million people, inhabiting a country which was quite a continent, should be ruled by a few thousand aliens, was contrary to any reasonable interpretation of the doctrine of self-determination. Even if the rule of the English had been efficient, economical and in the interests of the people, that would still be no argument for its indefinite continuation, for good government was no legitimate substitute for self-government. Many Americans also shared the view of the Indian leaders that the rule of the British had not, in fact, been economical or in the best interests of the Indian people. Indians claimed that the huge expenditures for the upkeep of the Army, for which they asserted there was no need, and for the upkeep of the

3. Quoted in *The New York Times*, December 26, 1921.

Government Houses, Civil Services, and for other demands on the Treasury, left far too little for education, sanitation, irrigation, railway extension and other social and industrial requirements. These arguments brought home to liberal-minded Americans the injustices done to the Indians and brought the aspirations of the struggling people nearer to their hearts. The American sense of justice and fairplay was touched when it was found that even in the administration of justice, discrimination was made between Indians and Europeans. A European offender, no matter what the charge, had the right to trial by a jury invariably comprised of a majority of Englishmen, and there were many instances when English culprits escaped punishment through the leniency of English jurors. In this regard, Eleanor Franklin Egan wrote:

In effect, there has always been in India one law for Englishmen and another law for Indians, though the distinction may not have been defined in the statute books. I am not making this statement on my own original authority, but am merely repeating an often-repeated and very familiar accusation. No Englishman could be tried except before an all-British court, and the general result is declared to have been that an Indian could seldom obtain judgment against an Englishman, while in everything that had to do with litigation he has always suffered humiliating disadvantages.⁴

Of all the groups in America, the Irish nationals have always been most sympathetic to the cause of India, for they believed that they were sailing in the same boat as the Indians. Both had been flattened beneath the Imperial steam-roller, and the Irish seemed to feel that "An enemy of the enemy is a friend." During his visit to America, Mr. de Valera, leader of the Irish Republicans, delivered a speech at a dinner of the Friends of

4. "British Conservatism in India," *Saturday Evening Post*, CXCVI (September 15, 1923), 137.

Freedom for India at the Central Opera House in New York City on the night of February 28, 1920, which illustrated the sentiments of the Irish nationals. He said :

But surely no American need wait for these facts, to be convinced that the British are in India not for India's good but to exploit India and the Indians, and that to ensure the continuance of their exploitation the British do not hesitate to resort to any means, no matter how revolting and how cruel, provided these means appear to them the readiest and most effective for the purpose. Dyer had to shoot the people of India else the British Empire could not endure in India. He was nothing but the faithful servant of his imperial masters, and as a faithful, trusty servant they promoted him for his deeds.⁵

There was another group in America which, though generally sympathetic to the demands of the Indians, viewed their aspirations with some misgivings. These people were greatly influenced by the internal social conditions in India. They believed that India was a vast mosaic—a conglomeration of peoples of different races, languages and creeds, of sharply differentiated social classes and of widely varying stages of culture. India had a population of more than three hundred million people, and in area was almost as large as Europe without Asiatic Russia, and this fact, in their opinion, aggravated the complexity of her problem. Nor was the problem made easier by the fact that there were in India many distinct races living together without fusing and without losing their physical and cultural characteristics. The number of dialects—which could be figured in hundreds—only added to the difficulty. Religiously, racially and linguistically India was indeed a conglomeration. True, there were other countries too where a multiplicity of religious sects existed, but in India the lines of cleavage

5. *India and Ireland*, (New York : Friends of Freedom for India, 1920), p. 15.

had social and political significance which was largely lacking elsewhere. These were not the only obstacles standing in the way of fulfilment of India's aspirations. The cow, for instance, was another consideration. The Hindus worshipped the cow ; the Mohammedans, on the other hand, killed it for food. In the opinion of these Americans, *Swaraj* could not be attained without Hindu-Mohammedan co-operation, and such co-operation could not be achieved unless the question of the cow was settled. Besides this, the problem of minorities was looming large. The Muslims believed that they would be in hopeless minority if India attained self-rule, and they would not tolerate the idea of Hindu rule. Above all, there remained the intricate and complex problem of caste. The caste system had divided Indian society into a large number of exclusive social aggregates, and it was feared that self-government would mean the usurpation of all political power by a minority composed chiefly of the Brahmins, who would use their privileged position at the cost of the lower castes.

Such, in general, were the apprehensions of this group of Americans. They were honest in their opinions and sincere in wishing India well, but in the absence of first-hand and accurate information, their judgment was influenced to a large degree by the anti-Indian propaganda in America. They did not have an opportunity to learn that their misgivings, though apparently true to some extent, actually had no direct bearing on the political ambitions of the people. Nor did they pause to realize that America, though itself a huge melting pot of diverse elements of different languages and cultures, had evolved a very successful form of government. India's social problems were magnified out of all proportion by certain interested parties, and in the light of these facts, the Americans considered the Reforms to be a great step forward on the road to self-government. They believed that these would afford the Indians adequate opportunity for training in the difficult art of managing their own affairs.

There was a third group in America who magnified all the above-mentioned problems to such an extent that they simply

considered the Indians unfit for self-government. Obviously they were greatly influenced by British propaganda and used almost the same language to put forward their arguments as was employed by the Conservatives in England. It is not surprising to find that there were people holding such views in America, for there was a strong undercurrent of pro-British sentiment in certain quarters which was entirely amenable to the British propaganda.

As regards the press, all shades of opinion were expressed in varying degrees. Not all the press, however, took note of the Reforms, and in fact only a small section offered any comment. Most of the space was devoted to a summary of the report or to the opinions of British papers. It is noteworthy that the American daily press took much less interest than might have been expected. Except for a handful of dailies, there was no editorial comment whatsoever; the *New York Times* and the *Christian Science Monitor* were the only two which showed more than superficial interest in the proposed Reforms. Considering the number of magazines and journals published in the country, the interest shown by them, too, was not up to the mark. The few articles which did appear showed a variety of opinion. Mr. Houghton, in the *Political Science Quarterly* for June 1919, wrote :

The Montagu-Chelmsford Report sees three cardinal defects in their working. Municipalities and district boards still rest under official control; there is no financial freedom for the provinces; and Indians, in spite of promises, are debarred from the higher administrative posts. These defects are real, but no one who studies the report and who understands the India of today will doubt that they touch only the hem of the subject.⁶

Some time later, Mr. Houghton wrote in the same journal that

6. "The Federation of India," *Political Science Quarterly*, XXXIV (June 1919), 226.

although at first sight the preamble to the Reforms merely showed that caution in advance and dislike of general principles so characteristic of Englishman, it disclosed on closer examination the clash between two opposing schools of thought.

In "self-governing institutions" and "responsible government"—the keynotes—democracy speaks. But the modifying clauses kill all the grace and virtue of her speech. Such expressions as "gradual development" and "progressive realization" may be used to excuse any delay, to stifle progress and to justify the most reactionary policy. They are expressions which have been on the lips of Indian bureaucracy for a century, and of their worth Indians have had ample opportunity of judging.⁷

Mr. H. M. Hyndman also was critical of the Reforms when he wrote :

Now it is certain that the proposals made by the Government are in every respect so insufficient and so disappointing that they cannot fail to produce a very bad impression—are in fact at this moment producing a bad impression throughout India.⁸

He believed that no attempt whatsoever had been made to put Indians frankly and definitely in even partial control of British India. In his opinion, the Central Government was to be as autocratic as ever, and all that was suggested was more association of Indians with Englishmen in the work of administration and some slight advantages in other directions.

7. Bernard Houghton, "Reforms in India," *Political Science Quarterly*, XXXIV (December 1920), 545.

8. "Unrest in India and a Remedy," *Asia*, XIX (July 1919), 67.

He considered the Reforms worse than useless, and summed up by saying :

It would take two hundred years at that rate, and perhaps longer, to establish for India any system of genuine self-government under British leadership.⁹

Charles Johnston, who was for many years a member of the Civil Service in Bengal and had later become an American citizen, frequently wrote on the Indian problem. He differed from the critics of the Reforms and voiced his opinion as follows :

This act gives each of the larger Provinces two Councils, in a way corresponding to our two Houses of Congress. The smaller is an Executive Council, which always includes native members; the larger is a Legislative Council, averaging fifty members; the majority in each of these is unofficial, and most of the unofficial members are natives of India. But, precisely to safeguard the rights of minorities—of the lesser peoples and the lower castes—these native Members of Council are appointed, not elected. If they were all elected, they would all be chosen from the Brahman oligarchy; and their counsels, to say the least, would not be favourable to men of other faiths and other castes. So the British method is in reality far fairer, far more genuinely representative. I believe that the wish of the Government to extend the native membership of the Legislative Councils and perhaps to make some of them elective, was the motive of the recent journey of the Secretary for India to the East.¹⁰

The *New York Times* remarked :

As a means of educating the Indian people in self-government, the arrangement looks somewhat

9. *Ibid.*

10. "Fuller Liberty for India," *The North American Review*, CCIX (June 1919), 778.

imperfect. ... We have seen it estimated that the number of people (in India) who really ask for free institutions does not exceed five per centum of the population. It is in any case a small proportion but to a particular numeral we attach no importance whatsoever Our reason is the faith that is in us.

May this faith be justified, the grumbling of the old Indian officials be proved foolish and brought to naught the apprehensions natural to those who wonder how much democracy is possible among the caste-bound Hindus.¹¹

The *Christian Science Monitor* commented editorially more than once. It considered the Reforms a great step forward, but regretted the way in which important bodies of Indians as well as individuals ignored what the paper considered to be the simple but fundamental factor which underlay the scheme. It maintained that not once, but many times, it had been made clear by those who were responsible for the Report, and those who were qualified to explain its terms, that the Reforms, though far from being the last word for all time, were the last word for that time. It said:

The very essence of the report, as has been pointed out already many times, lies in that paragraph which declares that "the hope of avoiding mischief in such transitional schemes lies in facing the fact that they are temporary expedients, for training purposes, provided the goal is not merely kept in sight but made attainable, not by agitation but by the operation of the machinery inherent in the scheme itself." The report makes it abundantly clear that the progress toward self-government must be by successive steps and that it is for the Imperial Government to decide as to the time and measure of each successive advance.¹²

11. December 8, 1919.

12. January 21, 1919.

In another editorial, *The Monitor* gave an account of the composition of the Central Legislature and concluded by remarking:

Thus the final decision in all important representative matters still rests with a nominated body and the whole plan is seen to be just what it declares itself to be—only a step, though a very substantial step, towards the desired goal, but not the goal itself.¹³

On May 31, 1919, quoting once again from the Report which said that the scheme was a temporary expedient for training purposes, this paper printed extracts from the speech of Mr. Montagu in the House of Commons when he admonished the House after expressing the hope that the Bill for the alteration of the Government of India would be introduced at the beginning of June of that year. He concluded his address emphatically:

. . . Do it differently if you like; find other methods if you please; but I beg of you do not do less.¹⁴

The paper reiterated its opinion that the Reforms were only a practical beginning, and said:

The moderate man, however, has recognized three things about it; first, that it was an honest attempt to inaugurate a policy the adoption of which the implacable march of events rendered inevitable; second, that it quite definitely safeguarded the full sovereignty of the British Government and, third, that it did not profess to be a final solution.¹⁵

Another comment worthy of notice was made in the *Los Angeles Times* which believed that India had been granted a

13. February 5, 1919.

14. May 31, 1919.

15. *Ibid.*

large degree of self-government. It added a note of caution when it remarked :

Principles of representative institutions must be gradually introduced in lands where the mass of the people fall far below western standards of civilization.¹⁶

The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* maintained that any idea of a wholly independent India had been abandoned long ago in India by all but a few irreconcilables and that the Reforms would be accepted as an act of justice and the promise of an unclouded future.

India is headed not towards a future condition like that promised to the Philippines, but towards such a status as that enjoyed by Australia or Canada. So complete a measure of self-government will doubtless be a long time coming, but the ultimate can be nothing less.¹⁷

At the beginning of 1921, when the new scheme was inaugurated, the *Literary Digest* expressed the opinion that it was one of the biggest experiments ever made in government, but was somewhat sceptical when it remarked in summing up :

As there are a limited number of eligible voters, control will pass to the hands of the Brahman oligarchy, and whether that will improve the lot of Indians remains to be seen.¹⁸

A year later, the *New York Times* said: "For whatever the outcome of the Reforms recently introduced in India, they will add to the general stock of political experience."¹⁹

16. December 29, 1919.

17. December 25, 1919.

18. LXVIII (February 1921), 21.

19. March 6, 1922.

The beginning of the year 1920 saw a definite cleavage of the political parties in India. The Liberals, who later constituted themselves into the Indian Federation of Liberals, had cut themselves off completely from Congress moorings and met at Calcutta in December 1919. While condemning the methods employed by the Punjab authorities in the suppression of the April disorders and demanding generous treatment for Turkey in the approaching settlement, they revealed an earnest desire to make the Reforms a success. Strangely enough, a complete metamorphosis had taken place within groups in the Congress regarding the question of the Reforms. At the Amritsar Congress, Gandhi had been in favour of working the Reforms. Now, a few months later, he was preaching non-cooperation, and those who had opposed his earlier attitude ranged themselves against him once more. It was the Khilafat question that brought about this metamorphosis, and as a matter of fact, the major events of the year centered around that issue.

What was this question of Khilafat? This important issue, which had been forced to the front after Turkey entered the Great War, concerned the extra-territorial allegiance of Indian Muslims to the Sultan of Turkey who happened to be the Caliph of Islam and who thus commanded the veneration of practically all Muslims throughout the world. With the sole exception of the Shah of Persia, every Muslim potentate recognized the authority of the Sultan as Caliph. In the case of the Indian Mohammedans, this spiritual allegiance to the Sultan of Turkey represented a continuity of historic tradition and religious belief from the time of the Mogul Emperors which the British Government had no option but to recognize. This recognition was at times tacit and at times—when the exigencies of international diplomacy ranged the British Empire in line with the Ottoman Empire—more open and direct. In fact, during the nineteenth century, Great Britain was able to make a bid for Muslim support in India by reason of her friendship with Turkey. When Turkey entered the Great War against the Allies, therefore, the situation from the point of view of Great Britain was not only unprecedented but ominously complicated. The Viceroy, on behalf of the British Government,

issued a proclamation wherein he regretted the entry of Turkey into the War and declared that the Holy Places and Jeddah would be immune from attack and molestation by British military and naval forces. Subsequently, as the War was prolonged and the British needed more recruits from India, Mr. Lloyd George felt it necessary to give further assurances to the Indian Muslims. On January 5, 1918, assuming to speak in the name of the whole Empire and its Allies, the British Prime Minister made the following categorical pronouncement :

... Nor are we fighting to deprive Turkey of its capital or of the rich and renowned lands of Asia Minor and Thrace which are predominantly Turkish in race.²⁰

After the war, as a result of the armistice, these promises were not kept. Turkey was shorn of most of her lands, and the Muslim community in India was enraged at the terms of the treaty. It was at the Amritsar Congress that leading Congressmen and Muslim community leaders decided to organize the Khilafat Movement under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi.

The leading members of the Muslim Community waited on the Viceroy on the 19th of January, 1920, and impressed upon His Excellency the necessity for the preservation of the Turkish Empire and of the sovereignty of the Sultan as Caliph. The Viceroy's reply to the deputation was disappointing, whereupon the leaders issued a statement to the effect that should the peace terms be unfavourable to Muslim religion and sentiments, Muslim loyalty would be placed under undue strain. The official historian of the Indian National Congress wrote :

Lord Chelmsford's emphasis on the fact that the question did not lie in the hands of Great Britain alone,

20. Quoted in the *New York Times Current History Magazine*, XVI (April 1922), 84.

was not reassuring, and virtually neutralized his profound sympathy with the Muslim point of view. The militant tone of certain sections of the French, English and American press regarding the desirability of settling the Eastern Question once, and for all, only strengthened the apprehensions of the Muslims. Influential sections of English and American opinion demanded that the Turks should be expelled from Constantinople and reduced to the status of a fourth-rate power.²¹

To a deputation of Muslims in England, Lloyd George curtly replied, on the 17th of March, 1920, that Turkey could not be treated on principles different from those that were applied to the Christian countries, and asserted that while Turkey was to be allowed to exercise temporal sway over Turkish lands, she was not to be permitted to retain those lands which were not Turkish. This struck at the root of the whole Khilafat sentiment in India.

Gandhi took up the question of Khilafat, and March 19, 1920, was fixed as a day of national mourning—a day of fasting and prayer. That he had already envisaged the struggle to follow is evidenced by the manifesto issued by him in the first week of March, when he announced :

The Khilafat question has now become a question of questions. It has become an imperial question of the first magnitude.²²

As a matter of fact, Gandhi attached even more importance to the Khilafat question than to the Reforms. He announced that he would lead the movement of Non-Cooperation if the terms of peace with Turkey did not meet the sentiments of the Muslims in India. He declared in the manifesto :

21. Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *The History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I, p. 190.

22. *Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi* (Madras: G. A. Natessan & Co., 1933), p. 487.

Non-Cooperation is, therefore, the only remedy left open to us.²³

It was in this atmosphere of unrest that the non-official report on the Punjab atrocities was published on March 28, acting as fuel to the fire.

The publication of the proposed peace terms on the 14th [of May, 1920, caused deep indignation, coinciding as it did with the publication of the Hunter Committee report on May 28th. The whole country was at the highest pitch of agitation. A special session of Congress met at Calcutta on September 5th and passed by an overwhelming majority a resolution to adopt a policy of "progressive, non-violent non-cooperation." Thus the Congress, in its existing state of strength, advised its adherents to take the minimum risk and to call for the least sacrifice compatible to the attainment of the desired objective. It wanted to strike at the root causes which helped the Government to consolidate its position, and thus urged the surrender of titles and honorary offices, refusal to attend Government levees and other official and semi-official functions, gradual withdrawal of children from schools and colleges, gradual boycott of British Courts by lawyers and litigants and, also a complete boycott of the elections.

The following months witnessed the advancing tide of non-cooperation all over the country. The boycott of the elections which took place in November was a fair success, but less successful was the boycott of courts and colleges, although their prestige was greatly affected. Numerous lawyers abandoned their professions throughout the country and plunged into the whirlpool of the Non-Cooperation movement. The number of students was not large, but the movement gave great impetus to national education. Nehru wrote in his autobiography :

The appeal for a boycott of the elections to the new

23. *Ibid.*, p. 489.

legislatures was remarkably successful. It did not and could not prevent everybody from going to these Councils and thus keep the seats vacant. Even a handful of voters could elect or there might be an unopposed election. But a great majority of voters abstained from voting and all who cared for the vehemently expressed sense of the country refrained from standing as candidates. Sir Valentine Chirol happened to be in Allahabad on the election day and he made a round of the polling booths. He returned, amazed at the efficacy of the boycott. At one rural polling station about fifteen miles from Allahabad city, he found that not a single voter had appeared.²⁴

The Government, however, described the elections as a great success and claimed :

These were held successfully in the teeth of intimidation and social pressure of many subtle kinds despite the best efforts of Mr. Gandhi and his followers.²⁵

The annual session of the Indian National Congress for 1920 was held in Nagpur. It was another triumph for Gandhi, and from that time onwards he was the acknowledged leader of the Indians, standing head and shoulders above the rest. The remarkable feature of this session was the change in the Congress creed. The previous proclamation of its aim of colonial self-government within the Empire, to be attained by constitutional means, was changed to the new goal of "the attainment of *Swaraj* (self-government) by peaceful and legitimate means." There was extensive reorganization and the Congress emerged as a well-knit, modern party machine with

24. *Jawaharlal—An Autobiography* (London : John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1939), p. 67.

25. *India in 1921-22, op. cit.*, p. 43.

units reaching into the villages and rural localities, and with a standing executive of fifteen members known as the Working Committee. Its weapon of non-violent non-cooperation was built on a definitely ethical foundation, deriving its impetus and basic characteristics from the personality of Mahatma Gandhi. The term 'Satyagraha' represented a whole religio-philosophical concept which he preached with fervor and sincerity. It was akin, in certain respects, to the Buddhist speculative thought, but more closely related to and taking its inspiration from the western school of thought associated with Tolstoy, Thoreau and Emerson who had profoundly influenced Gandhi's thinking during his earlier years in England. The meanings of the doctrine were accepted by most of Gandhi's associates more as a common-sense rule of expediency in the struggle of an unarmed people against the might of a well-equipped enemy. The movement swept forward and Gandhi was encouraged to prophesy the attainment of his goal within a year. Very few of his followers were clear at that time as to the exact implications of Gandhi's *Swaraj* and the strange methods of non-cooperation, and it was largely the forceful personality and moral strength of the man himself that carried the movement forward.

For India, 1921 was a year of strife and struggle. In the south-west, that beautiful strip of coastland known as Malabar witnessed a serious upheaval. The fanatic, hot-blooded and easily-excited Moplahs, the Muslim inhabitants of that area, rose in revolt, and for three months resisted all efforts of the Government to suppress them. The uprising was known as the Moplah Rebellion and resulted in some loss of life among the Hindus and to a few English officers, and in wanton destruction of property:

The Moplahs are the offspring of Arab immigrants to Malabar who came long ago, in pursuit of trade and settled in that part of the country. They oftentimes displayed an intense religious fanaticism which gave rise to serious disturbances. The Government of India was forced, consequently, to enact a special legislation known as the "Moplah Outrage Act" to deal with the trouble quickly and effectively.

In America, the Moplah uprising was given more publicity than it warranted, particularly by the press on the East Coast. It must be remembered that the American press still had no independent news service in India and had to depend on the British-controlled agencies. It is interesting to note, however, that the American press itself was well aware of the fact that it was in no position to arrive at an independent and unbiased conclusion, as is made clear in an editorial appearing in *The Nation* :

Some of the accounts represent the rising as another illustration of the revival of the militant spirit of Islam. Hindu peasants, they say, suffered more than the British *raj*; which may or may not be British propaganda.²⁶

The Nation's summing up was particularly significant :

. . . But whatever is or isn't true, this new revolt gives fresh proof of widespread Asiatic discontent with Western Imperialism—a discontent not confined to India. It is an important subject, involving half the population of the globe. Why do our enterprising news associations leave us so carefully in the dark?²⁷

The news of the Moplah rebellion only served to strengthen the age-long propaganda so laboriously and diligently circulated—that the moment the British left, the Hindus and Mohammedans would be at each other's throats and that chaos and anarchy would prevail from one end of the country to the other. Besides, one could easily discern a tendency on the part of British propagandists to encourage publicity about any outbreak or violence in India, particularly when some loss of life to British or other foreign nationals was involved. In the

26. September 7, 1921, 251.

27. *Ibid.*

circumstances, it was easier to justify British control of India and the occasional repressive measures used by the Government to suppress the urge of the people for freedom. In comparison to the Moplah rising, the Punjab disturbances of 1919, when General Dyer ordered a meeting of unarmed Indians to be fired upon, were of a much more serious nature. But the news in the latter case was carefully censored, for even the British felt that they had exceeded the limits of propriety. It was difficult to justify the General's action, in spite of the whitewashing that was done.

The Moplahs had been quiet for some time and the Government of India was anxious that the inflammable fanatics amongst them be kept away from the spark of non-cooperation. Gandhi's movement spread into that area, however, in spite of earnest efforts on the part of the Government to check it. The restrictive measures imposed upon the people for this purpose, particularly the martial law, was enough to incite the hot-blooded Moplahs. The rebellion was directed originally against the Government, but later it took a communal turn entailing large-scale atrocities on the Hindus. In the early stages of the uprising, the targets of attack were British nationals and Government property. It was reported that a number of Hindus were forced to accept the faith of the fanatics.

Various interpretations of the uprising were given in the British and American press. An Associated Press dispatch from London, published in the *New York Times*, said that the trouble arose from religious fanaticism and from the intense hatred of the Moplahs for Europeans and Hindus. It further emphasized the religious zeal of the Moplahs when it said that of politics and home rule they knew nothing, as they virtually were barbarians, but the religious torch would always stir them to bloodshed as they lived mainly for religion and were willing to die for it. The dispatch also mentioned the widespread propaganda of the Indian nationalists and the wrong done to the Sultan of Turkey by the Treaty of Sevres. The *Christian Science Monitor* shared the views of the Associated Press when it observed that the Malabar riots

... no doubt were an indirect result of the tremendous agitation at present carried on throughout the country by Mr. Gandhi and his followers. . . . For some time past, there has been a growing uneasiness throughout the great Mohammedan belt on the question of the solidarity of Islam.²⁸

This fact, according to the *Boston Daily*, had also influenced the attitude of the Moplahs. The uprising, accompanied by general looting and violence to Europeans appeared to be, in the opinion of the *Weekly Review*, an indication "of more or less general unrest in India, but it was not to be confused with the nationalist movement."²⁹ This journal also discerned the diabolical hand of the Soviet operating behind the uprising, and observed, "Doubtless the hand of Soviet agitators is to be seen in it, as well as the popular effect of Gandhi's non-cooperation propaganda."³⁰ The *New York Times* did not believe that Indian nationalism had much of a part in the uprising, nor did it consider the rebellion to be the result of any anxiety on the part of the Moplahs to effect a change in the Treaty of Sevres, for it was of the opinion that "men of Arabian blood are not likely to dote on the Turks."³¹ Nor did the paper think it likely, as some maintained, that the famine in the area was responsible for the Moplahs taking to the sword. It attributed the whole affair to the religious fanaticism of those people who loved nothing more than killing. The *Times* wrote:

These tribesmen are not happy unless they can go out on a raid with their two-edged sword. They are wild Mohammedans who love to slaughter Hindus whether they are nationalist or not.³²

28. August 31, 1921.

29. September 3, 1921, 203.

30. *Ibid.*

31. August 31, 1921.

32. *Ibid.*

Actually, none of the papers hit the mark. All the reasons they advanced had undoubtedly contributed in some measure or other to the outbreak ; by themselves, however, they were not sufficient. The motivating force behind the Moplah rebellion was the agrarian problem and the impending famine. None of the journals was convinced of this reason. The *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat* only raised a query when it observed :

The uprising is attributed directly to the efforts of political agitators and no reason is assigned why such agitators, who are numerous in India, should be more successful in this portion of the country than in other portions.³³

Investigation into this point would have brought to light the underlying causes of the great unrest. The *Springfield Daily Republican* came to an independent conclusion and at the same time threw some light on the query raised by *Globe-Democrat* when it observed :

Announcement of the India Office of famine in the disturbed area of Malabar is disquieting, because this region, while inferior in many respects to much of India, is normally exempt from famine.....The cost of living also has in the past been closely connected with the revolts of the Moplahs which, although ascribed to religious fanaticism; have also had their agrarian side.³⁴

After careful perusal of the newspapers and study of the various editorials which dealt with the Moplah uprising, one inevitably comes to the conclusion that the news was badly distorted by the time it reached American readers. Anyone who was aware at first hand of the political situation in India

33. Aug. 16, 1921.

34. Aug. 30, 1921.

at that time could easily discern the propaganda value of the news disseminated by the British-controlled agencies and others employed by official propagandists to bring home their versions of the stories. Nor were their efforts all in vain. In fact, they succeeded to such an extent that the *New York Times* was led to express the opinion, in a leading article, that the Moplah rising was only the beginning of a general uprising of the Muslims of the world against western civilization. The editorial went on to say :

The rising has been accompanied with what seems to have been the murder of many foreigners. While it may not be politically very serious, it is made disquieting by a recent assertion coming from apparently well-informed sources that the whole Muslim world is meditating and preparing for a new attack on the western nations it once before came conquering and destroying.³⁵

Practically all the Press maintained that the uprising was an indication of the general unrest of Muslims all over the world and that the beginning made in the south-west corner of India would spread through a large part of the peninsula and would ultimately affect the whole of Asia. The *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat* sensed in the uprising just such a danger, and was constrained to caution :

It was to guard against possible dangers arising in India that the Anglo-Japanese alliance was originally entered into. The Malabar resistance to authority, should it prove stubborn, might have an important influence in the question of renewing that alliance.³⁶

The *Baltimore Sun*, on the other hand, did not share the popular opinion, and remarked :

35. August 29, 1921.

36. August 26, 1921.

Yet since the English rule is in large measure sane and wise and far-seeing, since it seeks to spread the enlightenment which alone will permit any secure or enduring Indian autonomy, it is to be hoped that we shall soon learn that the Malabar disorders are not indicative of any wide-spread rebellion.³⁷

The Government of India took stern measures to put down the rebellion. It captured a number of insurgents and brought them away from the affected area for trial. The Government was guilty of gross neglect in dealing with its prisoners. In one instance, over a hundred Moplahs were captured, shoved into a single railway carriage and brought to Madras. On opening the door of the carriage the next day, it was found that nearly one-half of the prisoners had died from suffocation and thirst in the heat of the summer. A wave of anger swept the country, and the Government was accused of inhuman treatment of prisoners. The news ultimately reached America where, on account of the incident, the Government was strongly censured by the liberal section of the press. The Governor of Madras announced that everything possible was being done for the survivors, but the *Philadelphia Inquirer* did not think there was "much consolation in that."³⁸ The *New York Times*, which accepted the British interpretation of the implications of the Moplah rising, considered the incident only "a terrible mistake."³⁹ The *Times* observed that the fact that the affair was an accident and unintentional would not make it less useful to the foes of British rule in India, and that the fact that the Moplahs were the victims of stupidity and not of cruelty, only added to the burden of British responsibility. In the opinion of this influential paper, the bad character of the victims and their crimes would not prevent them from being held up and regarded as martyrs. It said :

37. August 28, 1921.

38. November 27, 1921.

39. November 26, 1921.

The affair too nearly parallels the tragedy of the Black Hole (of Calcutta) over which the British themselves have shuddered with horror, now, for the greater part of the century, and the native Indians cannot be expected to forget a grievance so real and so terrible.⁴⁰

The most severe criticism of the tragedy came from *The Nation*. This journal voiced the liberal American opinion by censuring the unfortunate happening when it observed that the memory of the Black Hole of Calcutta lived in millions of minds ; it was a symbol of horror to men who knew nothing of the incident which gave rise to it, and it had been used a thousand times as justification of British rule in India. The journal was most vehement in its criticism :

And now, under a liberal and supposedly humane British Government, 100 Moplah prisoners have been left overnight in a closed British railway wagon, so suffocating that in the morning 64 of them were dead. Do the British shudder with horror and go into sack-cloth and ashes that civilised white men should repeat the horrors of a century and a half ago ? Do their leaders follow Gandhi in fasting in penitence for the excesses of their followers ? No more than after Amritsar.⁴¹

According to Associated Press reports, the London papers completely ignored the whole affair. On the observation of the London *Times* correspondent that it was the general opinion in Madras that the wagon was unfit for its purpose and that at any rate it was a mistake to put so many prisoners in it at once, *The Nation* came out with a sharp admonition :

Clive did not feel so mildly after the Black Hole of

40. *Ibid.*

41. December 7, 1921.

Calcutta. Nor did Gandhi comment so lightly on the far more excusable riots in Bombay.⁴²

The new movement of Non-Cooperation took practical form in the boycott of foreign goods, and since these were mostly British, it dealt a severe blow to British manufacturers and particularly to the Lancashire textile industry. But the movement had no effect whatsoever on the institution of the schemes embodied in the new Reforms. The election to the Legislatures had taken place in November, 1920, and on February 9, 1921, the Duke of Connaught, uncle of King George V, came all the way from England to inaugurate the Central Legislature. On the Duke's arrival, Gandhi wrote him a letter which symbolized the feelings of the Indians. He said :

Your visit upholds Dyerism. Three hundred million innocent people are living in fear of their lives from one hundred thousand Englishmen. I oppose British rule to the bitter end.⁴³

The Government was anxious to placate the feelings of the Indians, as is evident in the words of the Duke, who appealed :

I have reached a time when I most desire to heal wounds and to reunite those who have been disunited. An old friend of India, I appeal to you all—British and Indians—to bury, along with the dead past, the mistakes and the misunderstandings of the past, to forgive where you have to forgive and to join hands and to work together to realize the hopes that arise, from today.⁴⁴

42. *Ibid.*

43. Quoted in the *New York Times Current History Magazine*, XIV (May 1921), 238.

44. B. D. Basu, *India Under the British Crown* (Calcutta : The Prabasi Press, 1933), p. 513.

But the memories of the Punjab massacre were too fresh for the Duke's words to have any mentionable effect on the people. They could not forget that the "hero" of the tragedy, Dyer, though relieved of his command, had been given by the people in England a handsome purse of twenty thousand pounds and, more important than money, the public honour given to him by the presentation of a sword for "saving the Empire," only demonstrated the mockery of the sentiments expressed by the noble Duke.

The year 1921 was one of great tension, and there was much to irritate and unnerve the officials. In his autobiography, Nehru wrote :

As our morale grew, that of the Government went down. They did not understand what was happening ; it seemed that the old world they know in India was toppling down. There was a new aggressive spirit abroad and self-reliance, fearlessness and the great prop of British rule in India—prestige—were visibly wilting. Repression in a small way only strengthened the movement, but the Government hesitated for a long time before it would take action against the big leaders. It did not know what the consequences might be. Was the Indian Army reliable ? Would the police carry out orders ? As Lord Reading, the Viceroy, said in December 1921, they were "puzzled and perplexed."⁴⁵

The Non-Cooperation Movement gathered strength during 1921 and had a great psychological effect upon the people. Before the advent of Mahatma Gandhi, the political movement had been restricted to verbal expression with sporadic violent outbursts here and there. Now, for the first time, there was a well-defined positive programme (though of a negative character) under the guidance of a strong leader with two decades of

45. *Jawaharlal—An Autobiography*, (London : John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1939), p. 70.

experience in his own technique of fighting. The people now lived and worked in a state of excitement, optimism and buoyant enthusiasm. The old feelings of oppression and frustration were gone completely, and in their place were dreams of freedom in the near future. Gandhi's pronouncement "Swaraj within a year" only added to the zeal and enthusiasm of his followers. A demoralized, backward and broken people had been lifted suddenly to life and action.

The movement was operated along novel lines, which to many, friend and foe alike, appeared to be utopian. The enemy was to be conquered not by force of violence, overt or covert, but by love. The mind was to be purged of national or racial hatred, and Gandhi made it clear that he was fighting not the English but their system of administration in India. There was no question of hatred or anger against individual Englishmen.

As the movement gained strength, its scope became wider. The All-India Congress Committee, which met at Bombay on the 20th of July, 1921, advised that "all persons belonging to the Congress shall discard the use of foreign cloth as from the first day of August next".⁴⁶ People were urged to wear "Khaddar"—homespun cloth. A special feature, particularly in big cities, was mass bonfires of foreign cloth. The use of Khaddar, apart from its political aspect, had a social value. It was worn by rich and poor alike and thus fostered a sense of equality among different sections of the people, at least insofar as their appearance was concerned. The object of the movement was not only political, however; the fight was to be carried on wherever there existed elements contributing to the degeneration of Indian society. A crusade was started against untouchability. Drinking was considered to be another enemy of society, and anti-drink propaganda was made throughout the country; traders were asked to discontinue business in intoxicants; liquor shops, like foreign cloth shops, were picketed by Congress volunteers, both men and women.

46. Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *History of the Indian National Congress*, p. 214.

At the height of the movement, the Government of India announced that His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales would arrive in India on November 17, 1921, with the purpose of becoming personally acquainted with the Princes and people of India. Mahatma Gandhi, however, discerned a different motive behind the visit, and stated that he had no doubt that the visit was being exploited for the purpose of advertising the "benign" British rule in India.

It is a crime against us if His Royal Highness is being brought for personal pleasure and sport when India is seething with discontent, when the masses are saturated with disaffection towards the system under which they are governed, when famine is raging in Khulna and the Ceded Districts and when an armed conflict is raging in Malabar: it is a crime against India to spend millions of rupees on a mere show when millions of men are living in a state of chronic starvation. Eight lakhs of rupees have been voted away by the Bombay Council alone for the pageant.⁴⁷

The Prince's visit to India was widely reported in the American Press. The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* believed that with many elements in India resentful of British domination and either secretly or openly hostile to all things British, "it was a rather daring stroke of policy to send the Prince of Wales on a visit to Britain's Asiatic Empire."⁴⁸ Many papers, however, did not share this view. There was much speculation as to the possible results of the royal visit. In fact, the same paper modified its statement by adding:

His Indian visit may well prove to be just what is needed to still the troubled waters. He may do more

47. *Young India*, October 27, 1921.

48. November 22, 1921.

than all the wisest statesmen and ardent conciliators have been able to accomplish.⁴⁹

The *New York Tribune* found it difficult to imagine anyone not liking the Prince personally, and commented on his amiable personality :

... If he could only hob-nob with Gandhi, that remarkable psychologist who has willed India to passive resistance—non-co-operation—might suffer a change of heart in spite of himself.⁵⁰

To the *New Republic*, the visit of the Prince to India, undertaken after much deliberation, was undoubtedly intended by the British Cabinet as a means of conciliation. It felt that as the King's speech at Belfast marked a change of Britain's Irish policy from repression to discussion, so the Prince might be expected to make an announcement which would bring the position of Great Britain in India and of India in the Empire within the bounds of negotiation. The paper considered itself justified in so thinking, for the British Cabinet could scarcely have been so lacking in knowledge of the situation in India as to send the Prince with nothing but fair words in his mouth. The Cabinet was expected to know better after their sad experience in the case of the Duke of Connaught, and they had undoubtedly assumed that the personality of the Prince and the general glamour of royalty would make an immediate appeal to the ignorant masses in India. But in spite of this, the journal was sceptical of the whole undertaking. It recognized the possibility of the British Government taking into consideration the fact that if there were no positive results from the royal visit, it would have an adverse effect on British rule, and remarked: "The Prince was either a vessel of reconcilia-

49. *Ibid.*

50. November 24, 1921.

tion or an agent of provocation.”⁵¹ Few papers indulged in any speculation as to the ultimate outcome of the visit. Even the *New York Times* was silent on the subject, and it is obvious that the announcement of the visit did not attract as much attention in America as did the events which followed it.

The Government of India had made great preparations for a fitting reception for the royal visitor, but Gandhi asked his countrymen to boycott the visit. With no ill-will against the Prince as a man, the people were asked to dissociate themselves from all functions and festivities arranged in his honour by the Government. The royal visitor arrived in Bombay as scheduled. Non-cooperators all over the country had organized what are known as *hartals*—closing of shops and suspension of all business in general, a boycott of the Prince. Unfortunately, in spite of Gandhi's having exhorted the people to remain peaceful, there were rioting and bloodshed in Bombay which continued for three days and resulted in the loss of life of fifty persons and the wounding of about four hundred. Disturbances took such a serious turn, in fact, that even the presence of Gandhi himself could not allay the eruption for some time. He was greatly shocked by the turn of events, but was able ultimately to quiet the people and bring peace to the troubled city.

The news of the rioting was rigidly censored, and, therefore the American press was in no position to draw a true picture of the situation in Bombay or anywhere else. The British Government made every effort to create the impression in America that the visit was a great success and that the Prince was very warmly welcomed by the general masses with only a few professional agitators, with Gandhi at their head, creating trouble at a few places. The following item appearing in the *New York Times* illustrates the degree of distortion applied to news from India :

Nowhere upon the surface of Bombay was there

51. December 1921, 117.

visible even a trace of that disaffection which is troubling India today, but Mr. Gandhi is determined to challenge the spontaneous, whole-hearted welcome of the Indians of every race, religion, caste and color. It is reported that he arrived in Bombay early this morning and held a meeting of malcontents, but if so, the "first city in India" has completely and contemptuously ignored him and all his works. Nothing could have exceeded the magnificence of the welcome of the Prince from the moment he landed at the brilliant pavilion at the Gateway of India to the last cheer that followed him into the quiet of the Governor's grounds.⁵²

In passing, it is interesting to refer to the account of the Prince's visit which the Government of India sent in its annual report to the British Parliament:

November 17th, the day of the Prince's arrival in Bombay, dawned with all the splendid promise of an Indian winter morning. To welcome the Prince there had gathered at Bombay not merely the Viceroy and a large number of Ruling Princes, but also leading businessmen and landed aristocrats from all parts of the Presidency. Amidst scenes of great enthusiasm, His Royal Highness landed on the shore of India and was received rapturously by a large and distinguished gathering.⁵³

By the use of such propaganda, the British were able to convince some sections of the American public into believing that the Prince's visit had been a great success. This is clearly to be seen from the comments of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* which said that although Gandhi was in Bombay at the time of

52. November 18, 1921.

53. *India in 1921-22*, a statement prepared for presentation to Parliament under the requirement of the Government of India Act (Calcutta: Government of India Central Publication Branch, 1923), p. 87.

the Prince's arrival and, it might be surmised, did his utmost to make the reception a fizzle, it went off excellently well. The paper went on to say:

His failure is a satisfying indication that the Indian peoples are by no means unanimous in their resentment against the British overlordship. It is also another indication of the winning personality of the British heir.⁵⁴

Even when the news finally leaked through, British propaganda had worked so well that the *New York Times* published a news item wherein it placed the entire responsibility for the riots at Gandhi's door. It said:

M. K. Gandhi, the leader of the Non-cooperationalists, chose the day of the Prince's arrival for a passionate appeal to the malcontents of Bombay and crowned the occasion with the usual bonfire of English cloth and English-made clothes bought for the purpose second hand in the bazaar.⁵⁵

Not every editor in America swallowed the British propaganda, however; for many it was difficult to believe that Gandhi, that apostle of non-violence, would himself incite the people to violence. The *Nation* was quite aware of the distortion of news from India, and was frankly sceptical of official hand-outs meant for American consumption. Its remarks are noteworthy and indicate the amount of distortion practised. In a leading article, the paper said:

News is what the news agencies choose to make it. Particularly Indian news. We read that the Prince of Wales landed at Bombay amid a tumult of enthusiasm

54. *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, November 22, 1921.

55. November 21, 1921.

and that the city decked itself in gay colors to greet him. We read columns of this stuff; and then six or eight lines reporting native riots "attributed by the authorities to agitation by followers of Mahatma Gandhi." Official welcomes we take for granted; of the native reception we should like to know more. Not so much the New York papers as official propaganda in India is responsible for the distorted stories that reach us. Whenever there is violence in India the authorities blame it on Gandhi. Falsely—for to anyone who reads Indian papers it is plain that Gandhi does his uttermost to restrain violent expression of the growing bitterness against British exploitation.⁵⁶

Under the heading "Loving Your Enemy in India," The *Nation* published the text of the appeal Gandhi made to the men and women of Bombay, wherein he declared that he would refuse to eat or drink anything but water until the Hindus and Mussalmans of Bombay made peace with the Parsis, Christians and Jews⁵⁷ and until the non-cooperators made peace with the cooperators. The journal further quoted Gandhi's own words:

The Swaraj that I have witnessed during the last two days has stunk in my nostrils . . . The non-violence of the non-cooperators has been worse than the violence of the cooperators. For with non-violence on our lips we have terrorised those who have differed from us and in so doing we have denied our God.⁵⁸

Gandhi considered the rioting to be a personal defeat, and assumed full responsibility for the tragic happenings. He fasted for five days pending the restoration of order, as a penance for the excesses of the people. In a statement issued a few days later, he declared:

56. November 30, 1921, 609.

57. Communities victims of the riots.

58. January 18, 1922, 80.

Nor can I shirk my own personal responsibility. I am more instrumental than any other in bringing into being the spirit of revolt. I find myself not fully capable of controlling and disciplining that spirit. I must do penance for it. For me the struggle is essentially religious. I believe in fasting and prayer and I propose henceforth to observe every Monday a twenty-four hours' fast until Swaraj is obtained.⁵⁹

The news of Gandhi's fast was reported widely in America. Americans were intrigued by the unique method Gandhi intended using to curb the violent tendencies of his followers and bring them back to non-violence. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* was certain that the disturbances were intended as an anti-British demonstration, the presence of the British heir-apparent being the immediate occasion for them, and remarked that Gandhi, the accredited leader of the anti-British movement which had been proceeding for many months with a steadily increasing impetus, "has not only disclaimed any responsibility in the matter but has earnestly deplored and condemned the inexpedient unruliness of his misguided followers."⁶⁰ The *New York Times* was very critical of Gandhi and imposed full responsibility for the disturbances on him, when it remarked:

As a remedy for the situation for which he is responsible—a responsibility he has the decency to admit—Gandhi has imposed upon himself a complete fast for one day each week.⁶¹

But the *Times* failed to understand how the fast would bring the people back to passive resistance, except that it might act as a deterrent at the idea of Gandhi going hungry for what he considered their sin.

59. *Mahatma Gandhi's Speeches and Writings*, (Madras: Natesan & Co., 1933), p. 601.

60. *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 27, 1921.

61. November 22, 1921.

The *New Republic* struck a different note when it declared that though Gandhi accepted responsibility, the fact was that the responsibility belonged to the British in a far higher degree. It observed :

After all, their rule must finally rest on the consent of the governed, and if that consent is largely withdrawn in consequence of their acts, the burden of proof is upon them. It is for them to define their position in India by negotiation or by the sword.⁶²

Gandhi's fast and his appeal to the public had a conciliatory effect on the people. The Prince toured all over the country. His visits were always preceded by mass arrests of Congress volunteers and their leaders, but the people, on the whole, remained peaceful. At Madras, as the *New York Times* reported :

The Prince was greeted with fatal riots and the war-cry "Hail Gandhi." The only spectators *en route* greeting the Prince were the school children.⁶³

At Calcutta, a volatile city which had given the British Government numerous and painful headaches in the past, the Government arrested a large number of Congress volunteers and leaders. These mass arrests of the leaders were not considered a wise step by the *Nation*. In an editorial, it remarked quizzically :

With these wholesale arrests and sentences has gone no charge that the victims advocated violence. The English are taking strange methods to secure the peace of India or an enthusiastic welcome to the Prince of Wales, and he at least ought to be a good enough sport to know it. To imprison men for peaceful non-coopera-

62. December 28, 1921, 117.

63. January 14, 1922.

tion is to invite violence. Perhaps the British *raj* thinks it would be easier to deal with that than with Gandhi's tactics.⁶⁴

The fact was that the city observed a complete boycott of the reception, although dispatches from India to England and to America indicated that it was not successful. It was rather hard for those with independent views to reconcile stories of a grand reception with wholesale arrests, though every possible device was employed to cover up unpleasant aspects and show a bright side of the picture. The *Nation*, with its liberal views, once again deplored the paucity and distortion of the news from India. Commenting on the lack of authentic news about the Prince's visit, it observed editorially :

Once more we deplore the lack of an American news service in India. We are obliged to depend for news of tremendous import upon fragmentary and biased semi-official British dispatches.⁶⁵

It used the Prince's visit to illustrate the rigid censorship applied by the British-controlled agencies.

Most of the British correspondents say that the boycott was a failure. Is the wish father to the news? Other British dispatches declare that on the first day the streets were deserted and in the same paragraph in which they call the *hartal* (general strike) a failure, they admit that 3,500 arrests were made in Calcutta alone, probably in order to ensure popular enthusiasm for the Prince.⁶⁶

The boycott of the Prince was only an incidental phase of the movement. During the month of December, 1921, an attempt

64. December 21, 1921, 717.

65. January 11, 1922, 29.

66. *Ibid.*

by intermediaries like Madan Mohan Malaviya and Jinnah, to effect a settlement between the Government and the Congress, failed. On February 1st of the following year, Gandhi sent a letter to the Viceroy intimating his intention to start a Civil Disobedience Movement in Bardoli—a place in Bombay Presidency. This was to take the form of non-payment of taxes by the peasants *en masse*, and not individual non-cooperation as had been the case previously. In replying to Gandhi, the Government reiterated its policy and stated emphatically that it would enforce the law relating to offences against the State as and when it might think fit.

The proposed mass civil disobedience at Bardoli could not be carried out. On February 5th, while a Congress procession was marching at Chowri Chawra—a small place in the United Provinces in the district of Gorakhpur—twenty-one policemen and a sub-inspector were obliged to retreat into a police station by the mob who then set the building on fire. All the inmates perished in the flames. The incident was a great shock to Gandhi, who saw in it his own humiliation and defeat. He subjected himself to five days' continuous fast, as a penance and self-purification. He declared :

I am in the unhappy position of a surgeon proved skillless to deal with an admittedly dangerous case. I must either abdicate or acquire greater skill. Personal penance is not only necessary but obligatory on me.⁶⁷

The Mahatma viewed the Chowri Chawra incident as a third warning⁶⁸ to suspend Civil Disobedience, and the Bardoli programme was accordingly abandoned. So, on February 11, 1922, the Working Committee met at Bardoli and resolved to suspend all offensive action including even picketing and procession. The people were to confine their activities to the constructive aspects

67. *Speeches and Writings of Mahatama Gandhi*, (Madras: G.A. Natesan & Co., 1933), p. 660.

68. The others were the Punjab disturbances of 1919 and the Bombay rioting on the occasion of the Prince's visit.

of the movement, including manufacture of Khaddar⁶⁹. The Committee advised the stoppage of all activities designed to court imprisonment.

The suspension of mass civil disobedience in Bardoli was resented by his colleagues and followers, particularly by the younger people. The incident at Chowri Chawra might have been deplorable and quite at variance with the spirit of non-violence, but to suspend the national struggle for freedom because in a remote village a mob of excited peasants failed to observe the rule, was something which was difficult for the younger element to swallow. Younger minds were prone to reason the efficacy of Gandhian methods of political warfare, and a feeling of uncertainty and frustration began to grow.

The Government took advantage of the lull and thought it an opportune moment to act. Consequently, on the 13th of March, 1922, Gandhi was arrested. At his trial he was accused of preaching disaffection against the Government and was sentenced to six years' imprisonment. In a written statement he pleaded guilty.

The arrest and imprisonment of Gandhi left a sort of void in the political atmosphere of the country. The originator of the weapon of non-violence was no longer on the battlefield, and finding the army of non-violent non-cooperators without their leader, the Government took advantage of the situation and increased the tempo of repression. The all-India Congress Committee, therefore, felt urged to re-assess the theory and practice and review the art and science of non-cooperation, passive resistance and civil disobedience. The leadership of the country fell upon the shoulders of C.R. Das, Vallabhbhai Patel and Motilal Nehru, who gave a new orientation to the movement. They wanted to beard the lion in his den and carry non-cooperation into the very citadels of Provincial and Central Governments. At the annual session of the Congress held at Gaya under the presidentship of C. R. Das, the matter of contesting the elections to the Council was hotly debated. The

69. Hand-spun cloth.

majority of members called the no-changers, adhered to the old programme. Later the minority group led by Das and Motilal Nehru, called pro-changers, constituted themselves into the Swaraj Party within the Congress organization but to seek election to the new Councils with the purpose of wrecking the new 1919 Act by working inside the Councils. The pro-changers continued their propaganda to muster public opinion behind their programme. The next annual Congress session of 1923, held at Delhi, afforded additional stimulus to the propaganda of the Swaraj Party, but for some time the no-changers held their ground.

The Khilafat agitation had given some anxious moments to the Government. On the 7th of March, 1922, Lord Reading, after consultation with Provincial Governments, sent a telegram in which he placed before His Majesty's Government his conviction of the intensity of the feeling in India regarding the necessity for the revision of the Treaty of Sevres. Publication of the telegram by the Hon. Edwin S. Montagu, Secretary of State for India, without the authorization and during the absence from the Cabinet of Lloyd George, cost Mr. Montagu his official position. The text of the telegram ran as follows :

On the eve of the Greek-Turk conference, we feel that it is our duty again to lay before Your Majesty's Government the intensity of feeling in India regarding the necessity for a revision of the Sevres Treaty between Turkey and the Allies.

The Government of India is fully conscious of the complexity of this problem, but India's record in the war, in which Indian Moslem soldiers participated in such great numbers, and the support which the Indian Moslem cause has received in the entire nation, entitle her claims to the completest fulfilment and justify her reasonable aspirations.

The Government in India particularly emphasizes the necessity of guaranteeing the neutrality of the Dardan-

elles and the security of its non-Moslem peoples. It also urges evacuation of Constantinople, sovereignty of the Sultan over holy places, restoration of the Turk in Thrace, also in Adrianople and Smyrna. The Government urges that these points are of supreme importance to India.⁷⁰

The publication of Lord Reading's telegram and the consequent resignation of the Secretary of State for India evoked a great deal of lively interest in some sections of the American press, which was on the whole very critical of the Muslim attitude. The *New York Times* took leading interest in the episode, and said, "Conditions in India are serious."⁷¹ It published the news in bold headlines and made frequent editorial comments in support of the stand taken by Lloyd George, and expressed dis-favour of the agitation of the Indian Muslims for the revision of the Treaty of Sevres. It believed that the revision of the Treaty, necessary though it seemed, was a matter of European politics, specifically of the Balkan and Near-Eastern politics. The *Times* was of the firm opinion that the question could not be settled by any single power, as had been demonstrated in the London conferences the previous year, and further emphasized the fact that still less could the question be settled by the fiat of a single power moved by the fears of one-seventh of its subjects. It wrote :

The Moslems of India are only twenty per cent of the population of India, and more than a hundred million people in the British Empire—and the dominant hundred million at that—are outside of India. If the British Government should change its whole Near-Eastern policy at the behest of the Indian Moslems, it would give an object lesson of the power of organized

70. *Current History Magazine*, a monthly magazine of the *New York Times*, April 1922, 2.

71. The *New York Times*, March 10, 1922.

minorities such as even the American Anti-Saloon League has never accomplished.⁷²

Besides the loud and honest criticism of the *New York Times*, there were others who, in their zeal, showed a hostile attitude not only towards the Muslim demand but to the entire political movement in India. They saw in the enforced resignation of Mr. Montagu and the arrest of Gandhi, the sensational features of the critical situation of Britain's Indian Empire, quite probably to be followed not only by the retirement of Lord Reading but by a wholesale shuffle of the British Cabinet. The attitude of such papers was not hard to understand. They had been led to believe that as a by-product of educational efforts of the British, there had arisen in India a class of people called "Babus" suffering from an overdose of education of the English variety. From these, unfitted for practical work and suffering from the handicap of a deep-rooted inferiority complex, had emerged a myriad of professional agitators who prated of Indian nationalism which, according to the view of a certain section of the press, was non-existent, and who shrank from no lies in order to spread sedition for their own purpose. The *Independent* and the *Weekly Review* wrote :

There is no such thing as an Indian nation, and only the strong hand of the British *raj* has kept the Mohammedans from the throats of the Hindus whom they loathe. Now the agitators have patched up a temporary truce between these traditional enemies and a reflex of this is seen in the demand of Mohammedans for the revision of the Treaty of Sevres and a restoration of power and territory to the Sultan as Caliph.⁷³

This journal so justified the British domination in India, believing that if England withdrew, the teeming land would fall back

72. *Ibid.*

73. March 18, 1922, 274:

into the barbarism of the middle ages and there would ensue horrors unknown in modern times.

A liberal and enlightened world, accustomed to the slogans of democracy, shrinks from the application of force to dependent people, but here is a choice between that appalling anarchy and chaos. England now must pay for the concessions mistakenly made to maudlin sentimentalism.⁷⁴

The story of the resignation of the Secretary of State for India was completely ignored by some sections of the American press, especially those in the West and South. On the face of it, the story did not constitute exciting news for them, particularly when it was associated with the complex political and religious sentiments of the Indian people. Very few papers consistently followed the trend of Indian politics, and consequently the isolated incident of the resignation of Montagu, linked with the attitude of the Muslims of India and the Khilafat question, was not likely to be intelligible to the majority of readers. A greater degree of interest was, however, shown by papers on the East Coast, and most of their comments were critical of India.

The Muslim demand for the revision of the Treaty of Sevres did not affect India alone; its repercussions were felt also in the Balkan peninsula. As a matter of fact, the whole foreign policy of Great Britain with regard to the Middle East and the Balkan area was definitely involved. Not only Britain, Turkey and some of the Balkan countries were concerned, but France and Italy also were keenly interested in the future of Turkey. That section of the American press which was mostly in line with and supporting the British foreign policy, could not remain oblivious for long to the insistence of the Khilafat movement. The moulders of American public opinion believed that the

74. *Ibid.*

Indian demands struck deep into the heart of the European situation and went much further than their authors had realized—further, even, than Turkish expectations. They maintained that the granting of Adrianople and Thrace to the Turks would give Turkey and Bulgaria a common frontier. Czechoslovakia, Greece and Rumania would at once take alarm, and not only would the Treaty of Sevres be shattered, but those of Trionon and Neuilly and Saint Germaine. In short, they believed that the whole edifice of South-Eastern Europe, as erected at the end of the War, would be endangered. As regards the implications of the restoration of the Sultan's sovereignty over the holy places, they pointed out that besides Adrianople, the holy places included Jerusalem, Medina and Kerbela in Mesopotamia, and such action would mean the undoing of the whole Near-Eastern settlement, the abolition of the Arab kingdoms of Iraq and Hedjaz, and the abandonment of the British mandate in Palestine.

The publication of Lord Reading's telegram raised a tremendous storm in the British Government, most of the thunder coming from Lloyd George himself. That the Government of India should press its view on the Home Government, was recognized as natural and proper—but that that pressure should take the form of a public appeal over the head of the Home Government, it was pointed out, was without precedent in Britain's relations not only with India but with her self-governing Dominions as well. There ensued a bitter controversy between Montagu and Lord Curzon, the British Foreign Secretary, who declared that Montagu had authorized the publication without giving him any opportunity to advise or to protest. Montagu, on the contrary, protested that he had given Curzon notice of his intention in sufficient time to allow him to prevent the publication. Lloyd George was ill and came to know about the matter only when he read his morning paper at home. He was amazed and angry. After consultations with the other members of the Cabinet, he sent for Montagu, declined to accept his explanation, and demanded his resignation forthwith on the ground that he had violated without cause or

necessity the rule of collective responsibility. Lloyd George believed that the publication of the telegram would make very difficult the task of the Foreign Secretary at the forthcoming conference on the Near East question. The *Literary Digest* commented that the publication of the India Government dispatch urging the necessity for the revision of the Sevres Treaty because of the intensity of Mohammedan feeling in India, "came as a bolt from the blue, we are told, on the eve of the Near East Conference in Paris."⁷⁵

Montagu had to weather the storm not only within the Government but without as well. Those who were antagonistic to his liberal views about Indian affairs and who advocated repressive measures against Gandhi and his political movement, were very vehement in their denunciation of the Secretary of State. Sir Michael F. O'Dwyer, who was Governor of the Punjab during the disturbances there in 1919, symbolized this group. Writing in the *Fortnightly Review* after the arrest of Gandhi, he asserted, under the title "India without Mr. Montagu and Gandhi," that each had succeeded in three or four years, often with the help of the same unscrupulous agents such as the Khilafat agitators, in unchaining the revolutionary forces and upsetting the social order through the length and breadth of the Indian Empire. He maintained:

Both have left a legacy of disorder and discontent among three hundred millions of people which it will take a decade of just, firm and consistent administration to compose.⁷⁶

One of the Prime Minister's strongest supporters, J. L. Garvin, a columnist of the London *Sunday Observer*, wrote that there had resulted "a further weakening of the Premier's authority in the eyes of the country and of the world," and that "the Prime Minister's resignation is suspended, it is not finally

75. March 1922, 17.

76. August 1922, 212.

withdrawn.”⁷⁷ It was also pointed out by Garvin that some of his closest adherents and some other experienced advisers urged him to go out as soon as the Irish Treaty was secure.

Montagu's sudden fall from power was a source of great pleasure to his political opponents in Parliament who greeted the announcement of his resignation in the House of Commons with fierce, welcoming cheers. For many months these die-hards had been attacking him for his policies regarding India and had many times demanded his resignation and the adoption of a strong policy of repression in India. Montagu made his position clear in a speech in the House of Commons and said he could not claim that Indians should dictate to Britain peace with Turkey, but he emphasized the fact that it was largely by the efforts of Indian troops that Turkey was conquered, and that they were entitled to every consideration in the terms of peace. Montagu also declared :

... Whether you like it or not, whether you agree with the Mohammedans in India or not, the most dispassionate observer must give testimony to the fact that our rupture with Turkey following upon the unprovoked entry of Turkey into the war and the continued hostilities between Greece and Turkey are profoundly affecting the peace of India.

The Government have never failed to represent the views of Indians, not merely Mohammedan, but Hindoo sympathizers on this subject, looking at the Indian representations from the Indian point of view.⁷⁸

Montagu further cleared his position in various addresses to his constituents wherein he particularly emphasized that Lord Curzon was aware of the text of Lord Reading's

77. Quoted from the *Literary Digest*, LXXII (March 25, 1922), 17.

78. Quoted from the *New York Times*, March 9, 1922.

telegram and that it had been published with his tacit approval. This disclosure caused great consternation in the political circles of Great Britain, as was evinced by the *Literary Digest* when it commented that the veil of mystery that enshrouded the resignation of Edwin S. Montagu as Secretary of State for India in response to Premier Lloyd George's request, was torn to pieces by the speeches of Montagu to his constituents in which "he dealt the present British Government one of the worst blows it has sustained during its long and turbulent career."⁷⁹

There was much speculation in India and in Great Britain regarding the outcome of the Khilafat agitation, in the light of the disclosure of Reading's telegram. A certain section of public opinion in both countries felt that the Treaty of Sevres should be modified to soothe the feelings of the Muslims in India. This view was held chiefly by people in India. There was a fairly strong current of opinion running, particularly in Britain, traces of which could be discerned in America, which maintained that the memorandum which evidently provoked Montagu's resignation affected not only India but the whole British Empire. They asserted that Indian Muslims or their vocal leaders, who had succeeded in convincing the India Government that they spoke for the masses, had demanded the evacuation of Constantinople, the restoration to the Turks of Thrace and Smyrna and the establishment of the Sultan's sovereignty over the "holy places" of Islam which, as they observed, included Jerusalem. They naturally asked the question—how could the promises which were made to the Indian Muslims during recruiting campaigns be reconciled with the promises to the Jews? The New York *Herald Tribune* concluded :

It is doubtful if the British public opinion would approve any such wholesale change in the Sevres Treaty.⁸⁰

79. March 25, 1922, 17.

80. New York *Herald Tribune*, March 10, 1922.

Speculation was rife, also, as to the actual degree of Hindu-Muslim solidarity. The Americans had been told that the two communities were always at daggers drawn and that chaos and anarchy would prevail the moment the British withdrew their benign hand from India. Naturally, then, interested Americans were surprised to see common cause made by the Hindus and Muslims with regard to the Khilafat issue which apparently did not materially affect the Hindus, for actually it was of no consequence to them whether or not the Treaty of Sevres was changed. If the Hindus had merely sympathized with the Muslims in their demand, it could have been easily understood . . . but they had made the Khilafat issue the main springboard from which to dive into the whirlpool of the struggle, and their action was baffling to most observers across the Atlantic. Some in America maintained that Gandhi, who was mainly responsible for the Indian National Congress resolving to fight for freedom on the Khilafat issue, did not represent the wishes of the masses but was only using this problem to stir up—along with other radical elements in the country—agitation against the British Government. The *New York Herald* summed up the situation thus :

The appeal bears the mark of another effort of that shrewd revolutionary and disturber further to harass Great Britain by involving her in a serious religious and international complication.⁸¹

Others believed that even though the Muslims were fraternizing with the Hindus in the common cause, the moment the question would be settled one way or the other, there would remain nothing to keep the two communities together. There were more optimistic observers, however, such as Bernard Houghton, who said, "It is no longer possible to govern India on the principle of *divide et impera*, to play off Mohammedan against Hindu."⁸² In his opinion, India was one. The *New York*

81. March 10, 1922.

82. "Reforms in India," *Political Science Quarterly*, December 1920, 552.

Times also shared this view and commented, "Indian Moslem agitation now has, on the whole, purely Indian objectives, even though it may employ purely Moslem means of propaganda."⁸³

In the resignation of Montagu, the *Times* saw an excellent opportunity for him to sever his connection with the Government which, in its view, was heading for troubled times with regard to India, but at the same time, the paper was doubtful whether the Cabinet would be happier to get rid of its Secretary of State for India than he would be to get rid of India. Judging from the political trend in India and in England, the *Times* reached the conclusion that Britain seemed determined to abandon the policy of compromise which Montagu and Reading had tried to carry out. The arrest of Gandhi, the rumours of unrest bursting out in spite of careful Governmental action, and lastly the resignation of Montagu, told the same story—that the country was seething with discontent. The appointment of Lord Derby, a Conservative, in place of Montagu, looked as if the Government was preparing for a showdown.

It looks as if Britain were getting ready to use the strong hand, and Mr. Montagu is likely to congratulate himself in the next few months at having left while the leaving was good.⁸⁴

Montagu's position indeed looked very unenviable, for he had been denounced by the die-hards for his liberal attitude regarding India and by the non-cooperators for his too illiberal approach to the Indian problems.

... To the Conservatives he has been a figure of dubious motives whose lightest crime was the reckless surrender of India to revolutionaries. Indian radicals,

83. March 10, 1922.

84. *Ibid*, March 11, 1922.

on the other hand, have seen in him a blundering tyrant whose reforms were ridiculously inadequate.⁸⁵

The *Times* was more inclined to subscribe to the opinions of the Conservatives, and said :

Students of the Near East have felt for two or three years past that he was a dangerous influence on British policy in the Levant, for he has always acted as if he considered Indian Moslem opinion the one and only decisive factor.⁸⁶

85. *Ibid.*

86. *Ibid.*

Gandhi and Non-Cooperation

From the year 1921, when Gandhi came to the forefront of Indian politics and started his Passive Resistance movement, news of India began to figure frequently in the world press. The personality of Gandhi, who was invariably represented as a saint for his Christlike way of life and his weapons of *Ahimsa* and soul force, attracted more attention than any other aspect of the Indian picture. It excited the curiosity of the American people that a frail, timid-looking little man could lead his proverbially gentle people in a fight against the might of the British Empire, and this without weapons, waging a war not upon the bodies but upon the souls of the English officials and attempting to conquer them by love and gentleness. The unusual always attracts attention, and Americans were intrigued by Gandhi's physical appearance and his rather ridiculous loin cloth. History had witnessed many struggles for freedom, but always the contestants had employed more the conventional method of violence and hatred. Here was a man using weapons quite foreign to the current ideas of the average American. The world had never before seen the like of this strange but effective warfare. This saintly little man who had never injured a living being, who knew nothing of war, who forbade violence in any form, had dared to strike a staggering blow at British rule.

in India. Sir Michael O'Dwyer, under whose regime the Punjab tragedy occurred, was forced to admit:

Since the Mutiny the position of our Government was never so weak, its credit never so low . . . our margin of safety in India was never so large, and in these days of world-wide anxiety and peril, it has been reduced to the vanishing point.¹

In view, therefore, of the importance of the role that Gandhi and his doctrine of *Satyagraha* played in Indian politics throughout his lifetime, no apology seems necessary for dilating upon the career of the Mahatma and elucidating his doctrine in some measure, although certain aspects of both may appear to fall somewhat outside the scope of this study.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born on October 2, 1869, in Porbunder, Gujarat. His was a Bania family, who followed the Jain school of Hinduism which regards *Ahimsa*, the doctrine of non-injury to any form of life, as one of its basic principles. This was the doctrine which Gandhi aspired to proclaim victoriously throughout the world. His ancestors had held high offices under the native Princes for generations. His father was Prime Minister of the small State of Rajkot, and his mother was a devout woman who fasted, gave alms to the poor and would not take food without first offering her daily prayers. Gandhi's boyhood was uneventful, and it is somewhat surprising though not uncommon, that he was not very bright in his studies. He was engaged to a child at the age of seven and married her when he was twelve. At nineteen he was sent to England to complete his studies at the University of London and at Law School. Before he left India, his mother made him take three vows—to live a celibate life while in England, to abstain from wine and to abstain from meat.

1. "Anarchy in India," the *Fortnightly Review*, DCL (February 1921), 190.

Gandhi arrived in London in September, 1888, and after overcoming the initial difficulty of food (he later found a vegetarian restaurant in Farringdon Street) the young man set about making himself into an English gentleman. He bought expensive clothes, joined a dancing class and even took lessons in music in order to learn the rhythm. It took him but a few months to realize the futility of his endeavours, for it seemed to him that he was wasting a good deal of time and money in his attempt to become an Englishman. So he gave up the idea, settled down to hard work and led a strictly regulated life. A friend gave him a copy of the Bible which he read diligently, and the Sermon on the Mount had a deep and lasting effect on him. The passage, "I say unto you; that ye resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man taketh away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also," made a tremendous impression on him. But it was the Gita—Sir Edwin Arnold's translation, *The Song Celestial*, whose exquisite beauty had such a profound effect on Gandhi. He made the acquaintance of some members of the Theosophical Society, notably of Madame Blavatsky and Mrs. Annie Besant, and their association stimulated in him the desire to study Hinduism earnestly.

Gandhi returned to India in 1891. It was a rather sad homecoming, for his mother had died in his absence and the news had been withheld from him. He decided to practise law in Bombay, but success eluded him. He went back to Rajkot to practise, and it was here that his first unpleasant encounter with a British officer had an ineffaceable effect upon him.

Gandhi's elder brother had asked him to put in a good word concerning him to the Political Agent—an Englishman whom he had known in England—as the Agent had become prejudiced against him in some matter. Gandhi reluctantly agreed to see the Political Agent, and at the interview he was amazed to find the man's attitude entirely changed. The officer on leave in England was far removed from the officer on duty in India. The Britisher refused to listen to Gandhi's story, and when the latter asked for a hearing at least, he ordered his servants to throw the

young lawyer out. Gandhi was greatly agitated by this uncalled-for insult. He wanted to take legal proceedings against the man for assault, but was dissuaded, for Englishmen in India occupied a privileged position. The shock of the incident, as Gandhi himself said later, changed the whole course of his life.

Shortly thereafter, Gandhi accepted—for a period of one year—a position as counsel to an Indian firm in a litigation in South Africa. He left Bombay in 1893, never dreaming that he was destined to stay away not for one year but for twenty years, fighting for the amelioration of the lot of Indian residents of the Union of South Africa at the hands of the Government there. It was in South Africa that Gandhi successfully put to test his doctrines of *Satyagraha* and non-violence which later were destined to play a significant role in the future history of India.

While in South Africa it soon became apparent to Gandhi that Indians there were treated with little or no respect. They had to undergo great suffering and were subjected to insult at every turn. Once Gandhi himself was thrown out by the Railway authorities from a first-class compartment for which he had purchased a ticket but which he was later told was reserved for whites. In another similar situation, he was bodily assaulted. In his autobiography he recalls :

. . . As I was struggling through these sentences, the man came for me and began heavily to box my ears. He seized me by the arm and tried to drag me down. I clung to the brass rails of the coach box and was determined to keep my hold even at the risk of breaking my wrist-bones. The passengers were witnessing the scene—the man swearing at me, dragging me and belabouring me, and I remaining still. He was strong and I was weak.²

Such incidents were bound to have their effect. Gandhi's sensitive nature was hurt by the sufferings of the Indians.

2. *Mahatma Gandhi, His Own Story*, by Rev. C.F. Andrews) New York : The MacMillan Company, 1930), p. 120.

who daily faced just such hardships as he himself had encountered during the first few weeks of his stay in South Africa. These incidents were surely responsible for his determination to lead a struggle for fair treatment for his people. To just what extent the British official in India who threw him out of his room, or the European who assaulted him in the train, and others who slighted him were unwittingly responsible for his revolt against cruelty and injustice, it is difficult to estimate. But the fact remains that Gandhi had gone to Africa for one year and remained there for nearly a quarter century to lead a political struggle the like of which had never been known in the history of the world.

The Indians in South Africa had gone there as plantation labourers. Romain Rolland has written :

In 1890-91, some 150,000 Indian emigrants were settled in South Africa, most of them in Natal. The white population resented their presence and the Government encouraged the xenophobia of the whites by a series of oppressive measures designed to prevent the immigration of Asiatics and to oblige those already settled in South Africa to leave. Through systematic persecution the life of the Indians in Africa was made intolerable ; they were burdened with overwhelming taxes and subjected to the most humiliating police ordinances and outrages of all sorts, ranging from the looting and destruction of shops and property to lynching, all under cover of "white" civilization.³

In 1893, Gandhi was called to Pretoria on an important case. Insults greeted him everywhere. In Natal, and in particular frequency in Dutch Transvaal, he was thrown out of hotels and trains, insulted, beaten and kicked. He describes a scene in his autobiography when he was surrounded by a crowd which was intent on killing him.

3. "Mahatma Gandhi," *The Century Magazine*, December 23, 1930., 165.

The crowd began to abuse me and showered upon me stones and whatever else they could lay their hands on. They threw down my turban. Meanwhile a burly fellow came up to me, slapped me in the face and then kicked me. I was about to fall unconscious when I held on to the railings of a house nearby. For a while I took breath and when the fainting was over, proceeded on my way. At that time, I had almost given up any hope of reaching home alive. But I remember well that even then my heart did not arraign my assailant.⁴

He was saved from the wrath of the crowd by the wife of the Superintendent of Police who chanced to pass by and saw his predicament. Later in the evening, the crowd surrounded the house where he was staying and threatened to burn it and kill him. He was saved by the Superintendent of Police who removed him from the house disguised as an Indian policeman and took him to the Police Station for safety.

When the Boer War broke out in 1899, Gandhi revealed his capacity for infinite tolerance and forgiveness by organizing the Indian Ambulance Corps and working under fire with his faithful followers. Again in 1906, at the time of the so-called Zulu Rebellion, he and his volunteers offered their services and gave medical aid to the wounded. Despite all this, the attitude of the white man toward the Indian continued to grow more menacing.

In 1904, Gandhi founded an agricultural colony at Phoenix near Durban, patterning it along Tolstoian lines. He called upon his compatriots, gave them land and made them take a solemn oath of poverty. He took upon himself the humblest tasks. He had developed a lucrative law practice at Johannesburg, but he gave it up and espoused poverty. He also took a vow of celibacy, for he had come to believe that continence was indispensable for self-realization, and that once aspiring to serve humanity with his whole soul, he could not do without it.

4. *Mahatma Gandhi, His Own Story*, p. 156.

He had also founded a newspaper called *Indian Opinion* which he published in English and three Indian languages.

Gandhi directed his movement of *Satyagraha* against the iniquitous tax of three pounds per head which the Government had imposed upon each adult Indian industrial labourer in South Africa. The movement fought against other disabilities as well, and thus began an epic struggle between spirit on one side and Governmental authority and brute force on the other. Romain Rolland commented :

For years the silent colony resisted the Government. It withdrew from the cities, gradually paralyzing the industrial life of the country, carrying on a sort of religious strike against which violence—all violence—was powerless, just as the violence of imperial Rome was powerless against the faith of the first Christians. Yet very few of these early Christians would have carried the doctrines of love and forgiveness so far as to help their prosecutors when in danger, as Gandhi did. Whenever the State of South Africa was in serious difficulty, Gandhi suspended the non-participation of the Indian population in public services and offered his assistance. In 1899, during the Boer War, he organized an Indian Red Cross unit which was twice cited for bravery under fire. When the plague broke out in 1904, Gandhi organized a hospital. In 1908, the natives in Natal revolted. Gandhi organized and served at the head of a corps of brancardiers and the Government of Natal tendered him public thanks.....But these disinterested services did not disarm the hatred of the whites. Gandhi was frequently arrested and imprisoned and shortly after official thanks had been preferred for his services during the war, he was sentenced to imprisonment and hard labor after being beaten by the mob and left behind as dead.⁵

Thus for twenty years the struggle went on, reaching its

5. Rolland, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

bitterest stages from 1907 to 1914. During the struggle many died as martyrs and many more went to prison. Ultimately the indomitable tenacity of the leader and the magic of his soul force won out; brute force had to bow down before soul force. In 1914, an Act abolished the three-pound poll tax and Natal was thrown open to all Indians desirous of settling there as free workers. His mission completed, the apostle of truth and non-violence returned to his country to lead his people to freedom. The story of Gandhi's life in India is the story of the struggle for freedom.

The doctrine of *Satyagraha* employed by Gandhi was an important innovation as a weapon of struggle for oppressed peoples. His doctrine formed the basis of popular resistance to the Rowlatt Acts and other repressive measures of the British Government. The term *Satyagraha* was coined by him in South Africa to express the force that the Indians used there for about a decade, and it was coined in order to distinguish it from the movement then going on in the United Kingdom and South Africa under the name of "Passive Resistance."

The root meaning of *Satyagraha* is "Holding on to truth," hence "Truth force." At times Gandhi has also called it "Love force" or "Soul force." In the application of *Satyagraha*, Gandhi maintained that the pursuit of truth could not condone violence in any form being inflicted on one's opponent; he must be weaned away from error by patience and sympathy, for what appeared to be truth to one might appear to be error to another. Patience, according to Gandhi, meant suffering. So the doctrine came to mean vindication of truth, not by infliction of suffering on the opponent, but on inviting it upon one's own self.

Gandhi saw a great deal of difference between *Satyagraha* and Passive Resistance. He said:

Satyagraha differs from Passive Resistance as the North Pole from the South. The latter has been conceived as a weapon of the weak and does not exclude the use of physical force or violence for the

purpose of gaining one's end; whereas the former has been conceived as a weapon of the strongest and excludes the use of violence in any shape or form. When Daniel disregarded the laws of the Medes and Persians which offended his conscience and meekly suffered the punishment for his disobedience, he offered *Satyagraha* in its purest form. Socrates would not refrain from preaching what he knew to be the truth to the Athenian youth, and bravely suffered the punishment of death. He was, in this case, a *Satyagrahi*. . . . It is called also Soul Force, because a definite recognition of the soul within is a necessity, if a *Satyagrahi* is to believe that death does not mean cessation of the struggle but a culmination. The body is merely a vehicle for self-expression; and he gladly gives up the body when its existence is an obstruction in the way of the opponent seeing the truth for which the *Satyagrahi* stands. He gives up the body in certain faith that if anything would change his opponent's view, a willing sacrifice of his body must do so. And with the knowledge that the soul survives the body, he is not impatient to see the triumph of truth in this body.⁶

It will not be out of place to quote Mahatma Gandhi further, in order to understand the true significance of his famous doctrine.

But on the political field the struggle on behalf of the people mostly consists in opposing error in the shape of unjust laws. When you have failed to bring an error home to the law-giver by way of petitions and the like, the only remedy open to you, if you do not wish to submit to it, is to compel him to retrace his steps by suffering in your own person—*i.e.* by inviting the penalty for the breach of the law. Hence *Satyagraha* largely appears to the public as civil

6. Quoted in *The Nation*, June 19, 1920, 837.

disobedience or civil resistance. It is civil in the sense that it is not criminal.⁷

A perusal of the American press with respect to the Non-Cooperation movement reveals frequent reference to Gandhi's personality, his life and his career. His new technique of revolution was so closely interwoven with the movement that the American press found it hard to dilate upon the struggle for *Swaraj* without making reference to his personality and method of warfare. Nor is this difficult to understand, for his character and personality were the driving force behind the whole struggle. Articles in American journals combined comment on the movement with biographical sketches of Gandhi and elucidations of his philosophy of *Satyagraha*, etc. The comments—particularly about his career and personality—made very interesting reading, and writers were inclined to look upon him as a saint, a holy man, a great soul comparable to St. Francis of Assisi or even Christ. His simple and saintly life greatly impressed the people of America, as it was apparent to them that he was exercising a tremendous influence on his countrymen. His unique methods of struggle for the liberation of his people from the yoke of a formidable imperialist power led some to consider him a very dangerous enemy of British rule. The *American Review of Reviews* voiced this sentiment :

Persons in power should be very carefull how they deal with a man who cares nothing for sensual pleasure, nothing for riches, nothing for comfort or praise or promotion, but is simply determined to do what he believes to be right. He is a dangerous and uncomfortable enemy because his body, which you can always conquer, gives you so little purchase upon his soul.⁸

One comes across many similar statements in studying the trend of American public opinion during the period of the

7. *Ibid.*

8. March 1921, 316.

Non-Cooperation movement. Such views were not evoked out of undue criticism or condemnation, but were the natural outcome of the peculiar personality of Gandhi, the like of which the Americans had never before witnessed. It was easy to understand the austere and ascetic life of a monk or a saint or a holy man . . . India was considered to be the home of such people . . . but for a saint to dabble in politics and to lead his people from slavery to freedom by methods hitherto practised by individual aspirants to spiritual enlightenment was something entirely new. It is significant to note that comments on Gandhi himself occupied more space in the newspapers than on the actual movement he led, and that his personality, more than any other factor, attracted the attention of thoughtful Americans. He came like a whirlwind into the Indian political scene, giving new life and hope to his oppressed people. The eyes of those in lands far and near turned toward India, for naturally there was curiosity and an eagerness to know about this little man clad in a simple loin cloth and oftentimes called "The terrible meek." Who was he? Where had he come from? Biographical notes of the new "Leader of India" appeared in profusion in the world press.

Soft dark eyes, a small frail man, with a thin face and rather large protruding eyes, his head covered with a little white cap, his body clothed in coarse white cloth, barefooted. He lives on rice and fruits and drinks only water. He sleeps on the floor—sleeps very little and works incessantly. His body does not seem to count at all. His expression proclaims "infinite patience and infinite love." W. W. Pearson, who met him in South Africa, instinctively thought of St. Francis of Assisi. There is an almost childlike simplicity about him. His manner is gentle and courteous even when dealing with adversaries and he is of immaculate sincerity. He is modest and unassuming, to the point of sometimes seeming almost timid, hesitant, in making an assertion. Yet you feel his indomitable spirit. He makes no compromise and never tries to hide a

mistake. Nor is he afraid to admit having been in the wrong. Diplomacy is unknown to him; he shuns oratorical effect or, rather, never thinks about it, and he shrinks unconsciously from the great popular demonstrations organized in his honor. Literally "ill with the multitude that adores him" he distrusts majorities and fears "mobocracy" and the unbridled passions of the populace. He feels at ease only in a minority and is happiest when, in meditative solitude, he can listen to the "still small voice" within.⁹

Thus wrote Romain Rolland, the great French thinker and author, in a series of three articles about Gandhi published in the *Century Magazine*. Here was a man, according to Rolland, a saint who could stir three hundred million people to revolt, who had shaken the very foundations of the British Empire and who had introduced into human politics the strongest religious force of the last two thousand years.

The quotation cited above is a typical, sober appraisal of Gandhi's personality. On the other hand, one often comes across accounts showing graphic contrasts of two mortal foes in a life and death struggle—the deadlier being a half-naked, meek-looking little man who ate little and slept even less, who had no use for worldly things—a monk, a holy man, standing alone to challenge one of the greatest Empires of the times with all its brute force at its command. The whole thing looked almost in the realm of fantasy and make-believe.

Gandhi was religious by nature, and so his doctrine was essentially religious. He once said:

Most religious men I have met are politicians in disguise. I, however, who wear the guise of a politician, am at heart a religious man.¹⁰

At the beginning of his political career in India, he had been

9. Rolland, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

10. Quoted in the *Literary Digest*, April 2, 1921, 40.

interested only in social reforms, devoting himself with special vigour to the amelioration of the conditions of agricultural workers and the untouchables. The cause of these unfortunate victims of the Hindu caste system he espoused all through his life. No mortal had ever done so much as he did to help the social outcasts. His statements on their behalf were pathetic. He chastised his co-religionists mercilessly :

Has not a just nemesis overtaken us for the crime of untouchability ? Have we not reaped as we have sown ? Have we not practised Dyerism and O'Dwyerism on our own kith and kin ? We have segregated the *pariah* and we are in turn segregated in the British colonies . . . Indeed there is no charge that the *pariah* cannot fling in our faces and which we do not fling in the faces of the English.¹¹

Gandhi considered untouchability a "foul blot" on Hinduism and a crime against humanity. His zeal for the reform of Hindu society persisted all through his life and was not confined to the question of untouchability alone.

It would not be wrong to say that Gandhi became a political leader by sheer necessity. Prior to 1919 he did not participate actively in the nationalist movement. After the untimely death in 1920 of Bal Gangadhar Tilak—a man of extraordinary energy with a great mind, a strong will and a high character—a gaping void was left in the ranks of the leaders, and who but Gandhi could fill the breach. As long as he lived, Tilak was the undisputed leader of India, and it is not unlikely that if he had not died when he did, Gandhi (who revered Tilak's genius while differing radically from him in regard to methods and policies) might have remained merely a religious and social reformer.

Though the American people greatly admired Gandhi's personality and paid tribute to his saintliness and sincerity of

11. Mahatma Gandhi, *Freedom's Battle* (Madras : Ganesh & Co., 1922), p. 162.

purpose, yet it was difficult for them to accept or even to understand his philosophy and particularly his views on the modern mechanised civilization. Gandhi believed—as many do in East and West—that modern civilization was concerned chiefly with bodily welfare and comfort. He considered it “satanic”¹² and held that “railways, lawyers and doctors have impoverished the country.”¹³ Machinery was the root cause of all evil, and hospitals were institutions for propagating sins and lawyers had helped to perpetuate the rule of the British.

Machinery has begun to desolate Europe. Ruination is now knocking at the English gates. Machinery is the chief symbol of modern civilization ; it represents a great sin.¹⁴

To him, this was an age of iron with a heart of iron. The machine had become a monstrous idol which must be done away with. To the sceptics, imbued with modern ideas, he would point out that India existed long before machinery was invented. Thousands of years ago India had learned the art of self-discipline and simple living and there through mastered the science of happiness. She had little to learn from other nations and she did not need either machinery or glamorous cities. Her ancient prosperity was founded on the plough and the spinning wheel and the knowledge of the mystery of life as proclaimed by her ancient seers and recorded in their philosophy ; therefore, India must revive her pristine purity, the imperishable fountain of her ancient culture.

Civilization is that mode of conduct which points out to a man the path of duty. Performance of duty and observance of morality are convertible terms. To

12. M. K. Gandhi, *Indian Home Rule* (Madras : Ganesh & Co., 1919), p. 30.

13. *Ibid.*

14. *Ibid.*

observe morality is to attain mastery over our minds and our passions. So doing, we know ourselves. The Gujarati equivalent for civilization means "Good conduct".¹⁵

In the light of even this brief sketch of Mahatma Gandhi and his views, it is not difficult to understand why the American people could not subscribe to his doctrines. In fact in India, too, some of his views did not find ready acceptance. Perhaps even his closest associates could not share all his convictions. It is difficult to imagine, for instance, his political successor, Jawaharlal Nehru, speaking in Gandhi's terms about modern civilization. But America represented just what Gandhi most dreaded in modern civilization, and naturally her people did not appreciate his point of view. Many Americans evinced a lively curiosity in his opinion on what they considered the necessary mechanical contrivances on which life in the modern era was based, and a few saw in his pronouncements a manifestation of his extraordinary sincerity. Bernard Sexton wrote :

There is no other political leader in the world who would dare assert that a great people, aspiring to nationhood on an equality with other powers, should limit its use of modern machinery—should, for example, abandon whenever possible the modern power-driven cotton spindle and revert to the use of the antique handloom used for thousands of years in the Indian village. Other statesmen declare for limitation of armaments. Will the future assert that Gandhi struck deeper—that he struck at the root of the evil when he proposed a limitation of machinery?¹⁶

Apart from the views of a few individuals, the press did not comment on Gandhi's peculiar ideas about modern civilization

15. *Ibid.*

16. "Gandhi's Weaponless Revolt in India," *The New York Times Current History Magazine*, February 1922, p. 750.

but wrote extensively about his personality, his saintliness and sincerity of purpose, the exception being the *Christian Science Monitor*.

Mr. Gandhi, in spite of all his well-known qualities of statesmanship which have earned for him high regard in Great Britain as well as in India, has stood revealed more and more, during the past few months, as the embodiment of reaction, in the simplest meaning of that word. Mr. Gandhi sees in the ways and methods of western civilization, in the railways, the telegraph, and the modern industrial system, nothing but the ruin of India.¹⁷

In spite of such stray remarks, the press as a whole was consistent in its appraisal of his personality and paid him warm tribute. The *New York Times* declared :

Concerning Gandhi, however, not even the British are able to cast the slightest aspersion on the high sincerity of the man.¹⁸

The *New York Times Current History Magazine* observed that the west had no man who was loved as Gandhi was loved in India, so it was difficult for occidentals to understand why a single gesture of that frail being could still the rising tempest of revolt.

There are plenty of people in India who want to fight, and the simple truth is that it is Gandhi's great doctrine of non-violence and his miraculous personal power which hold their hands from bomb and bullet. Even the extreme revolutionaries are waiting to see if

17. July 7, 1921.

18. July 10, 1921.

the greatest experiment ever tried can possibly succeed.¹⁹

The Nation voiced the almost unanimous feeling of respect toward the man Gandhi.

In an age men call cynical, materialistic and disillusioned, the national hero and leader of India is a saint whose singular devotion, unselfishness and spiritual power have won him the almost superstitious reverence of his own people and the respect of the most sceptical critics. At a time when the western world is unable to think of concerted resistance in other terms than those of war, Gandhi has been able to persuade the organised Indian national movement to use non-cooperation as its weapon. The freedom of India, he realizes, may have to spring from the blood of her heroes, but he pleads, "Let it be said by coming generations that the only bloodshed was our own." Not only violence of deed but of thought is a spiritual weakness. The brave man will renounce hate even of the oppressor.²⁰

Though the press looked askance at his views on modern civilization and what it stood for, probably considering them to be the eccentric ideas of a holy man, yet his views on truth, non-violence, *Ahimsa*, *Satyagraha* and their elucidation, found a ready audience. Some periodicals like *The Nation* and *The New Republic* quoted extensively from his writings and speeches expounding his doctrine.

In its appraisal of Gandhi, the press concluded unanimously that the Mahatma had created a revolution in the minds of his fellow countrymen and that he was a difficult adversary to be reckoned with. Gandhi was also credited, by almost all the sympathetic press, with having a strong hold not only on the

19. June 1922, 440.

20. *The Nation*, CXIII (September 14, 1921), 282.

Hindus, his co-religionists, but on the Mohammedans also. In this connection, *The New York Time's* appraisal is amusing:

The Mohammedans attached themselves to a powerful figure who had arisen outside the ranks of Mohammedanism. That figure was the new Gandhi . . . With Gandhi stand two Mohammedan leaders, Mohammad Ali and Shaukat Ali—huge, bluff men . . . They are a strange trio, this tiny, frugal Hindu vegetarian and pacifist and the two enormous Mohammedan meateaters and warriors. Were the British not too busily occupied with far more serious matters, they might conceivably permit themselves a smile at the spectacle of these two Mohammedans looming beside Gandhi.²¹

Glowing tributes to Gandhi and to his influence on the Indian masses were paid by various writers. Brian P. O. Shasnain did not consider the Mahatma a visionary; he said :

He has actual political power, the power given him by over a hundred million followers.²²

Shasnain maintained that the British feared Gandhi more than any other man on earth—far more than they feared de Valera or Lenin, for they recognized that he was fighting with weapons which he knew how to use with consummate skill but which they did not know how to counter at all. He continued :

. . . Bullets, bayonets, artillery, aeroplane bombs, are useless against the man who is teaching all India to despise death, even to die loving the slayer. For Gandhi insists that his followers shall not harm the British, no matter what evil they do. He treats the

21. July 10, 1921.

22. "Hind Swaraj", *The Catholic World* (July 1922), 498.

British as if they were children playing with a force they know not of.²³

Space does not permit quoting at length the numerous views expressed by noted columnists but some were especially noteworthy. Clair Price, in "Gandhi and British India" which appeared in the *New York Times*, wrote:

The Government of India in its own country is the most powerful government in the world—has met and overcome many an obstacle in one way or another, but today it is up against an obstacle of a sort which is brand new in its experience. It is up against M. K. Gandhi, a dark little wisp of a man who looks as if he could be picked up in one's arm and carried off like a child. In point of personal following, he is far and away the greatest man living in the world today . . . He is a philosophic anarchist, a new Tolstoy without Tolstoy's past. He specializes in reducing his wants. He has fasted so long and so often that he physically is a mere shadow of a man. He is an idea, living for a moment in a frail and brittle body.²⁴

W. H. Roberts observed:

He preached a gospel even more amazing than his personality. It was a message of renewed self-respect and regenerated manhood, of freedom and a future of spiritual glory for India. Not by warfare was this to be won. Indeed freedom so won would not be worth the cost. Real freedom could come only from moral regeneration.²⁵

23. *Ibid.*

24. July 10, 1921.

25. "A Review of Gandhi's Movement in India," *Political Science Quarterly* (June 1923), 230.

W. W. Pearson said :

It is not because he stands for a definite policy in regard to the British *Raj*, but because he is a saint, a man of austere and ascetic life who follows Truth at whatever cost to himself. Not even his worst enemy has ever doubted Gandhi's sincerity.²⁶

Bernard Sexton described Gandhi as a morning star to India, a new leader of the insurrection in spirit, a man whose title was not General but Mahatma, a man who had invented for war a new explosive which he named Soul Force. He added :

... The man through whose leadership these things have come to pass is evidently one of the great characters of history, one of those "pale thinkers" whom Emerson describes as being let loose on the planet now and then for its purification.²⁷

There were others, however, who did not look kindly on Gandhi and who, in their zeal to carry on anti-Indian propaganda, could see in him only a danger to modern civilization and thus a mortal foe of Great Britain. Gandhi's greatest critic in this respect was one Maurice Joachim, one-time member of the Indian Civil Service, who had come to America ostensibly to put his views before the American public. He deprecated Gandhi's methods and went to great pains to disabuse the American public of the mistaken notion that the Mahatma's principles had any solid basis to rest on just because they were receiving popular support. He maintained that Gandhi was considered a master mind because he had enlisted the sympathies and co-operation of the followers of the Prophet, and that he was canonized because he submitted with

26. "Gandhi—An Indian Saint," *The New Republic* (July 27, 1921), 240.

27. "Gandhi's Weaponless Revolt in India," *New York Times Current History Magazine* (February 1922), 745.

passive tolerance when arrested by the British, and he was acclaimed a divinity because he donned the garb of a yogi and lived on plain, simple food. In the opinion of Joachim, these things meant nothing. His explanation was :

Popular support for a new fad is not an uncommon thing in India. There has always been an undercurrent of ruthless criminality in the Indian masses. This is kept under control in normal times, but Gandhi's doctrines have brought it to the surface and he has received a ready response because the majority of Indians experience an abnormal pleasurable excitement in defying law, provided they are in a crowd.²⁸

The Hindu-Muslim entente which Gandhi had brought about, he asserted, would be short-lived. All the passive tolerance which Gandhi exhibited, and his pose as a martyr, his methods of life, his clothes, his food, were just the means to an end. Joachim wanted the American people to know that Gandhi was obsessed by a fanatical sense of self-importance. He considered him a hypocrite, for according to his information, this little man—who frequently had been compared by American missionaries to St. Francis and Christ—had realized that his asceticism and appeal to Hindu tradition were the only means of reaching Indians of all classes.

He thrives in this age of cant and cheap notoriety because political reputations often depend upon the persistence and vehemence with which the catch phrases and the popular cries of the movement are reiterated.²⁹

Mr. Joachim's point of view was shared by one Barker, who wrote :

28. "What is Wrong with India," *New York Times Current History Magazine* (July 1922), 649.

29. *Ibid.*

England's difficulties, however, are by no means ended. Numerous agitators continue making mischief and deluding the masses. Among these Mr. Gandhi is by far the most prominent.³⁰

Pointing out that Gandhi was a pupil of Tolstoy and had met the great Russian philosopher, poet and moralist and had learned from him the gospel which combined lofty idealism with anarchism, Barker asserted that this was the very gospel which had destroyed Russia.

While it is obvious that the American people were greatly impressed by Gandhi's personality, and the press, particularly the liberal section, commented on him frequently, and favourably, it was his Non-Cooperation movement which called for the widest variety of comment. It may be remembered, however, that not all journals were interested in either Gandhi or his political movement. Interest in India was confined to a small section, and there too in varying degrees. Some papers and journals maintained a consistent interest; others commented sporadically; a few were prone to be influenced by British propagandists and at times unwittingly expressed anti-Indian sentiments. The inadequacy of first-hand information and the well-organized British propaganda machine were the root causes for this state of affairs. Then there were some papers which published the news but did not venture or care to comment. Nevertheless, there was a good deal of comment on the Non-Cooperation movement—both thoughtful and otherwise, at times quite out of tune with reality and frequently savouring of British propaganda. The pro-British leanings of some papers warranted the latter attitude.

Varying degrees of opinion, both favourable and unfavourable, about the Non-Cooperation movement were expressed by American editorial writers as well as by correspondents and columnists. The comments embraced different aspects of the

30. J. Ellis Barker, "Giving India Self-Government," *Ibid.* (May 1921), 233.

movement, producing literature of a very refreshing nature. A good deal of space was devoted to the leader of the movement, his influence on the masses, the efficacy of the non-violent technique, its achievements and implications, and also the entire repudiation of the above by some. The majority of the comments, which extolled the leader, surprisingly enough did not view his movement in such a favourable light.

The liberal section of the interested press, as well as laymen of liberal outlook, who viewed the Indian struggle with favour and sympathy, had always an appreciative word to say about the movement and genuinely believed in its efficacy. On the other hand, the British propagandists and the journals which favoured the British attitude for one reason or the other, commented differently. By perusing all these comments about the Indian national movement—editorial as well as those by independent writers—one comes inevitably to the conclusion that the opinions expressed showed more of the influence of an emotional approach to the problem. While the liberals based their opinion on the ethical ground, believing in the inalienable right of the people to manage their own affairs, the critics of the movement—especially the propagandists—laboured hard to support their point of view by quoting facts and figures and dwelling at length on the backward social life of the people, the caste system, the conglomeration of races and languages, etc. In their zeal to carry their points of view, which mainly were that Indians were not fit to rule themselves, that democracy could not work in India, that Gandhi's movement was very reactionary and stood against all that modern civilization had to offer, that the majority of Indians were well off under British rule and did not want any change, and finally that the Gandhian movement—being reactionary—was doomed to failure, they oftentimes misrepresented facts and at times even contradicted themselves.

It would be tedious to quote at length the various misrepresentations and contradictions, but an example will suffice to throw light on the nature of the anti-Indian propaganda. Maurice Joachim, whose diatribes have been

quoted more than once, was the most vociferous of all. To bring home his point of view, he always emphasized that his attitude toward the problems of India was not influenced by anti- or pro- feelings toward India or Great Britain, and he always referred to India as "my country". In his article entitled "What is Wrong with India," he went to great pains to establish that Gandhi's demands were impractical. He criticized Gandhi's views on railways, and asserted that his drive of exhorting his people to use homespun and boycott foreign cloth was doomed to failure.

I do not know whether he (Gandhi) has taken into consideration the teeming masses, numbering, according to the latest census, nearly 325,000,000—85 per cent of whom are engaged in agricultural pursuits. These agriculturists work between twelve and sixteen hours a day, and I would like to know where they are going to find the time to weave the cloth.³¹

He further described the inability of Indians to defend themselves from foreign attack, since the climate was not conducive to the health of the majority of the people who worked for more than half the day.

Over most of India, the climate, for considerable parts of the year, is not conducive to the human energy. The excessive temperature is inimical to sustain either physical or mental effort.³²

Without explaining how, under such adverse circumstances, the 85 per cent of the people could work for twelve to sixteen hours a day and thus not find time to weave cloth, he maintained that the majority of the people readily developed pneumonia during the winter and were thus incapable of work

31. Joachim, *op. cit.*, p. 644.

32. *Ibid.*

in some parts of the country. Contradicting himself in another article, he said :

Assuredly the Indian agriculturists, who comprise 85 per cent of the population, are very poor, but their poverty does not make them discontented with their lot. It is not commonly appreciated that the agriculturalist's indigence is very largely accounted for by the fact that he does so little work, and what is more, that he does not need to do more.³³

In the same strain, he went on to say that the Indian peasant did not need to build himself a house for warmth to keep out the draught, though he had observed that exposure to winter weather caused many cases of pneumonia. The peasant was very contented with his lot, though to the passing visitor from the West he appeared as a miserable, pitiful object ; that, according to Joachim was only in the light of comparison, and any comparison between West and India was a total failure. He summed up his argument thus :

These cultivators do not even realize that they are under the protection of the Union Jack, and the Government never interferes with them, but allows them to pursue the even tenor of their ways. Thousands of them have never seen a white man. Ninety per cent, or about that proportion, have never heard of the name of Gandhi who, as is not known in the West, recruits most of his followers from the student class of India.³⁴

As stated above, only a very small section of the press took any lively interest in Indian affairs, and this explains the

33. Joachim, "America's Attitude Towards India," *New York Times Current History Magazine* (September 1922), 1031.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 1034.

paucity of comment on the Non-cooperation movement in the early twenties. Of those comments which were favourable to Gandhi and his movement, one by the *New Republic* is very characteristic. It pointed out that the thing which immediately struck the imagination of the world was the fact that the Indian revolution was proceeding under the direction of Gandhi by primitive methods, Christian as well as Buddhist, of passive resistance, and went on to remark :

When Mr. Gandhi calls on his followers to renounce the social order which the British *raj* has imposed on India, to give up titles and offices, to refrain from Courts, to withdraw their children from Government schools, and above all to abstain from violence, "to hold every English life and the life of every officer serving the Government as sacred as those of our own dear ones," he is following more closely the methods of Jesus than any leader since Saint Francis.³⁵

The Nation was of the opinion that a complete verdict on the course of Indian nationalism could only be written by time, and yet it predicted :

But even now it is possible to say that British or rather Western imperialism is doomed. We are witnessing one of the great historic movements of our time in the awakening of Asia.³⁶

It further commented that howsoever that awakening manifested itself in India, whether in the slow and constitutional progress of the Moderates, the spontaneous revolt—half blind and often violent—of exploited workers and hungry peasants, or the ordered resistance—spiritual and economic—of the non-cooperators, the struggle of those long oppressed deserved the

35. July 27, 1921, 232.

36. September 14, 1921, 282.

sympathetic understanding of every man who desired a new birth of freedom in every land. It also echoed the yearning for a new light that would disperse the clouds of despair hovering over many a county in these words :

But if the triumph of India should mean the triumph of spirit and method of Gandhi, then indeed would a new day dawn for all mankind. For war would be shown to be as unnecessary for winning the outer semblance of freedom as it is destructive to the realization of its inner spirit.³⁷

The *New York Times Current History Magazine*, in a leading article, observed that the first two stages of the Mahatma's programme—refusal to accept Government titles or honours and refusal to attend Government schools—had been executed with a much wider success than was generally believed. The next two stages—refusal to serve in the Government police force or the Indian Army, and refusal to pay Government taxes—loomed in the future.

What cares Gandhi—this dark little wisp of a man, who lives like a Hindu Monk and fanatically believes that India can be saved only by a return to the teachings of ancient Vedas and to a primitive state of society—for the public renunciation of his movement by Indians of lofty intellectual rank such as Rabindranath Tagore? England, the national enemy, must be dispossessed. And so powerful is Gandhi that the Government of India is afraid to arrest him, and Gandhi and the people of India know that the Government is afraid to arrest him.³⁸

Gandhi had to steer his course through troubled waters, The Government was tightening the repression every day

37. *Ibid.*

38. October 1921, 178.

making it difficult for the people to give up the notion of violence entirely. The masses were not used to the practice of non-violence against repression, and were disposed instinctively to retaliate force with force. The Government employed repressive measures out of all proportion to the circumstances. It was, perhaps, easier for the Government to suppress violence rather than non-violence. Bernard Houghton observed:

The chief form that this agitation took was *Satyagraha* or passive resistance....There was in it nothing seditious, nothing dangerous to public order. But officialdom saw danger where no danger was.³⁹

These difficulties Gandhi had to face, and *The Nation* was inclined to hope that he would succeed.

At least, if Gandhi succeeds in spite of all obstacles and in the face of the growing desire of many Indians to use violence, it will mean that mankind has at last found a way to resist oppression without resorting to war. The peace of the world depends upon the perfection of some method of non-violent resistance to imperialism.⁴⁰

The *Literary Digest* saw in the movement a new method of fighting, and observed :

Non-cooperation, a negative word describing the most powerful resistance ever offered to British rule in India, has perhaps puzzled the outside world about the movement led by Mr. Gandhi, who is described by some opponents as a combination of a religious mystic and anarchic agitator.⁴¹

39. "Reforms in India," *Political Science Quarterly*, XXXV, December, 1920, 549.

40. November 16, 1921, 557.

41. *The Literary Digest*, LXX, July 30, 1921, 19.

That the outside world was perhaps puzzled by the methods used by Gandhi against one of the most authoritarian and well-organized governments in history, is not surprising. Gandhi's faith in his creed was indeed unique. He believed in the fundamental power of pacifism, and relied on the strength of non-violent resistance. "I believe," the Mahatma said, "that a man is the stronger soldier for daring to die unarmed with his breast bare before the enemy."⁴² The bravery of the non-cooperator, was one which was open to the weakest among the weak. It was open to women and children too. The power of suffering was the prerogative of nobody, and he maintained that if all the Indians could show the power of suffering in order to redress a grievous wrong done to the nation or its religion, then India would never have to draw the sword.

I make bold to say that the moment the Englishmen feel that although they are in India in a hopeless minority, their lives are protected against harm, not because of the matchless weapons of destruction which are at their disposal, but because Indians refuse to take the lives even of those whom they may consider to be utterly in the wrong—that moment will see the transformation of the English nature in its relation to India.⁴³

The words of the *New Republic* were typical of many in America and the world over :

With Ireland and Austria before us, we can only marvel at the greatness of such faith.⁴⁴

The above remarks would puzzle many in the West (an opinion

42. Quoted by the *New Republic*, XXVII, July 27, 1921, 233.

43. *Ibid.*

44. *Ibid.*

which was expressed by *The Literary Digest*⁴⁵), for non-cooperation was a phenomenon the like of which the world had never seen.

Many articles were written on the Non-Cooperation movement as it progressed. Those who had neither anti nor pro leanings towards Britain or India mostly refrained from expressing any opinion and gave only bare outlines of the happenings in India, but in doing so, they sometimes exaggerated their accounts as it often happens. This might be attributed to the lack of securing first-hand information, or the exaggerated accounts of the achievements of the movement appearing in the Indian press, which they sometimes quoted. Also, it might have been due to the fact that their high and venerated opinion of Gandhi added colour to their statements about the movement. For example, Bernard Sexton wrote that Gandhi's followers were in a very simple and literal sense doing what he advised. People had made bonfires of their foreign-made clothes; lawyers had abandoned lucrative practices; thousands of cases had been taken out of Law Courts; over 25,000 titles had been renounced.⁴⁶ In the same strain, Romain Rolland wrote in the *Century Magazine* that in inaugurating his Non-Cooperation movement, Gandhi returned the medal of Kaisar-i-Hind which had been given to him by the British Government for humanitarian work.

Gandhi's example was immediately followed. Hundreds of Magistrates sent in their resignations; thousands of students left the colleges; the Courts were abandoned; the schools were emptied.⁴⁷

Anyone acquainted with the movement at first hand would consider this account to be over-stated. There were very few

45. *The Literary Digest*, LXX, July 30, 1921, 19.

46. "Gandhi's Weaponless Revolt in India," the *New York Times Current History Magazine*, XV, February 1922, 752.

47. Rolland, "Mahatma Gandhi," the *Century Magazine*, CVII, January 30, 1924, 390.

Americans who had occasion to witness the drama from close quarters, and of the few, Gertrude Emerson was one. She had visited India when the Non-Cooperation movement was at its height and had travelled extensively through the country, meeting people of all shades of opinion—both Indian and non-Indian, official and non-official. She wrote a series of long articles for *Asia*, wherein she commented that Indians had not apparently shown much inclination to begin non-cooperation by surrendering their titles. Out of an approximate total of 5,000 holders of honorary titles, she maintained, only some 21 (including Rabindranath Tagore) had resigned their titles in the wave of indignation that carried over from the Punjab troubles. The movement for the secession of lawyers from the Courts, according to Miss Emerson, had met with more marked success, but the administration of law was by no means paralyzed. With regard to elections, she observed that the non-cooperators made strenuous efforts to render the election of 1920 abortive by breaking up meetings, picketing booths and intimidating candidates who had refused to recognize the Nationalist appeal to withdraw their candidature. As a result, only about twenty per cent of the total number exercising the privilege of franchise made use of it, and in only six cases out of six hundred and thirty-seven where elections took place, was an election rendered impossible owing to the absence of a candidate. She concluded :

Instead of wrecking the electoral machine, the non-cooperators merely succeeded in excluding themselves from a position where they might have made their influence directly felt in the administration of the Government. As it is, Liberals, rather than Extremists have held the legislative posts and have been able to contribute valuable work to the first years of the new system.⁴⁸

48. "Non-violent Non-cooperation in India," *Asia*, XXII, August 1922, 607.

As usual, the news from India was too inadequate for the people of America to form a true picture of the situation. "The British dispatches about India are meagre and often contradictory,"⁴⁹ wrote *The Nation*. This state of affairs was not conducive to proper assessment of the situation by those who sympathised with the Indian aspirations, and that is why their comments were mostly opinions lauding the movement and sentimental appreciations of the non-violent campaign rather than critical appraisals. Those indulging in anti-Indian or pro-British propaganda were able to get ample material to work on from British sources. Thus the sympathetic view saw in the struggle the world's newest and most glorious experiment in national self-consciousness. Lothrop Stoddard, though aware of the grave situation in India when the Government started its repressive measures, believed that the outcome of the crisis would affect all mankind.

Not only are the most fundamental interests of the British Empire and Asia at stake, but every quarter of the globe, including America, will feel the result. India is far away. Nevertheless, the spark of Serajevo proved once and for all how small and close-knit is the modern world.⁵⁰

To Bernard Sexton, the Non-Co-operation movement was the folk movement of all India. He said that it was a passionate determination to return to the Aryan way which gave so much to the world in times past when England was forest-clad and America unknown. It was not merely a political phenomenon, he believed ; it took us all back to that bright dawn of history when the white Aryans poured down through the Himalayan passes upon the plains of India.

—those Aryans who are our own cousins and whose speech we still carry into daily life. In India today they

49. September 14, 1921, 282.

50. "The Problem of India," *Century Magazine*, CI, February 1921, p. 492.

cry in different words the same slogan that was used by our ancestors—the words that fired the English at Runnymede, the American at Bunker Hill. It is an ancient word, a word that has ever stirred the Aryan blood—the word Freedom.⁵¹

J. Z. Hodge sees in the Indian awakening a hopeful future.

Without observation but not without significance, the miracle has been wrought and this ancient people after centuries of internal division and political childhood rises to the dignity of national self-consciousness. The “white man’s burden” reverts back to the shoulders of the “Aryan brown.”⁵²

Mr. Hodge believed that India, “long and fragile ward of Great Britain,” would now do her own thinking and determine her own destiny, a junior partner for the time being in the family of nations that comprised the British Empire.

The emergence of India in the arena of world politics is an event we dare not ignore. There is challenge as well as appeal in the new call of the East.⁵³

Such were the opinions of those who were sympathetic to the cause of the Indians. Critical opinion was more vociferous, particularly that of the propagandists. The greater section of the American press interested in the Indian news, which formed a very small minority as already noted, viewed the situation with a critical eye. The inadequate facilities for getting accurate, first-hand information often coloured their judgment. Of all the

51. “Gandhi’s Weaponless Revolt in India,” the *New York Times Current History Magazine*, XV, February 1921, 752.

52. “The United State of India,” the *North American Review*, CCXIV, October 1921, 450.

53. *Ibid.*

dailies, the *Christian Science Monitor* showed most consistent interest. From almost the very beginning of the Non-Cooperation movement, this paper believed that the campaign was a failure. This view was held not only by the daily press but also by periodicals and some commentators. As early as January 21, 1921, the *Christian Science Monitor* declared :

The Non-Cooperation movement inaugurated by Gandhi, the well-known Indian leader, last summer, a campaign which sought to bring the Anglo-Indian Government of India to a standstill by the simple refusal of all Indians, Mohammedan or Hindu, to take part in it, has proved a failure.⁵⁴

The paper seemingly came to this conclusion on the results of first general election held on the basis of the Act of 1919, in which the Liberals participated, and the Congress boycott made no marked impression. It observed :

But if the recent general election, the first to be held under the new Government of India Act, proved anything, it proved that the extremist elements are by no means in control in India, but that on the contrary there is a strong disposition to give the new Act a fair trial and to endeavour to make it a success.⁵⁵

This paper, which claimed to be well-informed about Indian affairs, failed to see that a few people could always be found to co-operate with the Government. The above statement, made at a time when the movement was gaining strength, indicated a lack of familiarity with events, and a few months later the paper was forced to admit :

The fact is no one can gauge the real strength of the

54. January 21, 1921,

55. *Ibid.*

Non-Cooperation movement in its present phase. There is, however, this to be said of it : that its collapse may well be as rapid as its rise.⁵⁶

In a leading article a few months later, the same daily (once again) reiterated : it is wishful thinking that the movement had entirely failed.

The elections to the new councils proved an unqualified success, while little or no response was made by the educated classes to Mr. Gandhi's general appeal for non-cooperation.⁵⁷

It emphasized its conclusion three months later :

The situation in the country, generally speaking, although difficult, is not unduly serious. Mr. Gandhi has failed, so far, in practically everything he has attempted, and there is no reason to suppose that he will succeed any better in the future.⁵⁸

The *Monitor* saw in the picture of India as drawn exclusively by the newspapers of the day, a continual round of rioting and unrest, but it believed that those who know India and had made any real study of the march of events, recognize to how great an extent those evidences of unrest were unreliable signs when compared with the real progress of the country.

In spite of all that may be said to the contrary, time is working steadily on the side of law and order. The simple justice of the Government of India Act is wearing down opposition, whilst aiding every movement

56. *Ibid*, August 26, 1921.

57. *Ibid*, November 15, 1921.

58. *Ibid*.

toward better things is the far-reaching statesmanship of the Governor-General.⁵⁹

Apart from its comments about the failure of the Non-Cooperation movement, the *Monitor* often gave expression to views which could not be considered sympathetic to India and which frequently betrayed a lack of real understanding of her problems. For example, it said :

The most baffling feature of the whole movement is the designedly intangible objectives which are set before the people, the avenging of the Punjab massacres, the revision of the Treaty of Sevres and granting of full swaraj.⁶⁰

The reason why the so-called "intangible objectives" of the movement were baffling to the paper was its inability to understand the apparently different standards of values of thought and action of the Mahatma, who was the guiding spirit of the campaign. The *Monitor* was not the only paper which was thus handicapped. Many other too laboured under this handicap in varying degrees, and this explains the wide variety of comment.

In an editorial on July 29, 1921, the same paper reiterated its view that Gandhi no longer enjoyed the influence in India which he did six months before ; that the Non-Cooperation movement which he had inaugurated with such tremendous promise of success had proved a failure ; that the previous few months had witnessed a great rallying of moderate opinion to the support of the Government in its effort to work the Government of India Act of 1919.

The caste system in India is often asserted by many to be a serious impediment to the working of democracy. The *Monitor* assessorated :

59. *Ibid.*

60. *Ibid.*, August 26, 1921.

The one obstacle between India and the full realization of her hopes of self-government is caste. A freely elected Parliament in India today would simply mean a Brahmin Parliament and nothing else.⁶¹

Such a statement gave little evidence of familiarity with conditions in India, but similar remarks frequently issued from the mouths of British propagandists. A close study of the problem would not have verified them. Commenting on the question of caste in Indian politics, the Reverend J. J. Sunderland very aptly remarked :

The British offer many reasons for their claim that Indian people cannot rule themselves and therefore that the British must stay. One of these is the existence of caste. But why should caste prevent self-rule ? Caste is not a political institution. It has nothing to do with politics or government. It is solely social and religious. In political and governmental matters all castes work together.⁶²

The *Monitor* not only considered the Non-Cooperation movement a failure, but came to the drastic conclusion that it was losing its political character, and said :

More and more, as the months go by, it is coming to be seen that the Non-Cooperation movement in India is rapidly losing its political character. As a matter of fact, it never was a true political movement, and never depended for its success upon the political ability of its advocates.⁶³

The *New York Times Current History Magazine* also was of the opinion that the movement had proved a failure, and both

61. *Ibid*, July 29, 1921.

62. *India in Bondage*, (New York : Lewis Copeland & Co., 1930), p. 13.

63. August 26, 1921.

papers expressed this view at the very time when the movement was actually gaining strength. *The Times Magazine* wrote :

The situation in India continued to present an aspect far from assuring to the British Government, despite the fact that the Non-Cooperation movement launched by Mr. Gandhi, the Indian Nationalist leader, had by no means met with the success which its sponsors had expected.⁶⁴

According to this journal, the movement had done much to intensify anti-British feeling in India, and it felt that Gandhi had made a critical mistake in applying his movement to the colleges. *The Weekly Review* considered Gandhi's programme to be "impractical."⁶⁵

Comment in the press by well-known persons concerning Non-Cooperation and the general situation in India, were of a varied nature. J. Ellis Barker, in an article entitled "Giving India Self-Government" which appeared in the *New York Times Current History Magazine*, feared :

The carrying out of the Gandhi programme would lead to complete chaos in India, as the British-established law courts, schools, etc., cannot be replaced by native institutions.⁶⁶

He observed that Gandhi had extravagantly demanded, in addition, the resignation by Indians of all titles and honorary offices, and the boycott of all undertakings managed by Englishmen. Mr. Barker believed that as the railways, the telegraph, the post office, the irrigation service, etc., were directed by Englishmen, the accomplishment of Gandhi's programme would involve India's reversion to barbarism.

64. January 1921, 93.

65. September 3, 1921, 203.

66. *Op. cit.*, p. 233.

Maurice Joachim said :

In spite of the popularization of Gandhi's antediluvian economics, a spirit of moral courage and logical thinking still survives among the people of India. Gandhi's economics, like his politics, are being thoroughly discredited, and doubting souls are troubled over the actual form of government that they will have if *swaraj* ever materializes.⁶⁷

In another article "What is Wrong with India," Mr. Joachim strongly denounced the Non-Cooperation movement. He sought to prove that Hindu-Muslim fraternity during the movement was a sham and a mockery which would merely give rise to further complications in the proposed autonomous state, and that the inevitable internecine warfare would arrest and paralyze all arts and industries throughout the country. He asked, "Will Gandhi be prepared to answer before the altar of the world's judgment when, after a few years of his attempt at government he gazes on the ruins of a shattered India and sees how the work of centuries has been destroyed?"⁶⁸ This writer was a very frequent contributor to the press, and from a perusal of his writings, one comes to the unmistakable conclusion that he was indulging in violently anti-Indian propaganda and was labouring hard to influence public opinion. This contention is amply borne out by his open call to Americans :

Unhesitatingly I make this statement—Americans, beware ! Do not lend an atom of support to Gandhism, which is nothing more nor less than the most formidable menace to Western culture and a cleverly devised conspiracy against the progress of civilization.

The American who is cooperating in the movement for the promotion of self-government in India, or in

67. "India Turns Away from Gandhi," *Ibid.*, December 1922, 462.

68. *Ibid.*, July 1922, 645.

other words, who is helping India to attain the "swaraj" of the Nationalists led by Mohandas K. Gandhi, is slowly but surely paving the way to make his brother American a pariah in the East ; is unconsciously helping to drive out every American from India ; is aiding and abetting the abolishment of American enterprise in the East ; is contributing his time and money to uproot and disrupt all the good work that American missionaries, the American Salvation Army and the American YMCA have performed after years and years of self-sacrifice ; in short, is cooperating in a movement to turn back the clock of civilization.⁶⁹

It might be added that Mr. Joachim made it plain to his readers that when he left India (he referred to India as "my country"), he left behind his politics and was in no way connected with the administration or civil functions of the country. He declared that his position was entirely neutral ; he was neither pro-British nor pro-Gandhi. Apparently Mr. Joachim could not be accused of having pro-British or pro-Gandhi sentiments, but one could not but consider him anti-Gandhi.

The comments of other writers varied. P. W. Wilson, writing on "The Unrest in India," made an elaborate apology for British rule. He maintained that the most convincing argument in favour of British rule was not that it had been free from faults, not that it had done all that it should have done, but that there had been so much for British rule to accomplish. In spite of the few injustices to Indians (for Mr. Wilson believed that grievances against British rule was trivial when compared with such social oppressions as the Indian tyranny over women) he concluded :

You will seldom or ever find a missionary—not an American missionary—who would wish to see India,

69. Joachim, "America's Attitude Toward India's Revolt," *Ibid.*, September 1922, 1031.

here and now, committed to the sole rule of Indians. What the missionary fears in the national movement is its conservatism.⁷⁰

W. H. Roberts, reviewing the movement in 1923 when the agitation had lost its force, observed :

As the idealism of Gandhi's message suffered from its connection with the political agitation, so the political movement was weakened by a lack of contact with the prosaic, every-day realities of Indian need. The movement was negative in name and character. Its emphasis was upon destruction, and it lacked either sharply defined aims or a constructive programme.⁷¹

He concluded by remarking that the weakness of non-cooperation would become increasingly obvious as the glamour of Gandhi's personality faded and as man turned from visions to realities.

James W. Warner used his article "The Problems of India" for the same purpose as that served by Mr. Joachim, but in a different way. Mr. Warner admitted that Gandhi was undoubtedly a visionary though he considered himself a "practical idealist."⁷² Writing at great length about the benefits of British domination and quoting statistics on railways, highways, telegraph lines, etc., built by the British in India, he mentioned other benefits of British rule such as seventeen million acres of irrigated land, a dozen Universities, a system of public schools, modern docks and harbours, many hospitals and dispensaries, a modern sanitary service, an extensive forestry service, a system of famine relief, efficient civil and police services and a modern system of justice and modern codes of law. He did not omit to

70. "The Unrest in India," *The World's Work* (March 1922), 549.

71. "A Review of the Gandhi Movement in India," *Political Science Quarterly*, (June 1923), 243.

72. *Harper's Magazine* (October 1923), 645.

mention in some detail the participation of Indians in the governmental functions of their country. Commenting on the movement led by Gandhi, he said :

Some of his proposals for the destruction of British power, such as the boycott of the Courts, were childish, while others like the withdrawal of the children from government-supported schools . . . were suicidal.⁷³

A correct estimate of the political situation in India by the press and people of America was severely handicapped by want of unbiased news from India. Such was the paucity of news that the *New York Times* was constrained to remark :

Little news gets out of India. The censorship is doing its work thoroughly. But occasional correspondence appears in English newspapers to yield hints of what is going on under the stricter Government policy since the arrest and imprisonment of Gandhi.⁷⁴

At times, however, opinions would be expressed concerning the political movement, both in the press and on lecture platforms by persons who had visited India. A trip to India by a few individuals, even with the avowed purpose of studying the situation at first hand, could not make up for the lack of authentic material from which the American people suffered. As far as public speeches were concerned, platform comments depended upon the predilections of the particular individual. Professor Claude Van Tyne of the University of Michigan went to India to study the problem impartially and at first hand, and came back feeling very optimistic about the situation there—from a British point of view. He delivered a lecture at Williamstown, Massachusetts, in the course of which he said :

73. *Ibid.*

74. June 11, 1922.

The British will work out some solution of their problems.....England may have come too slowly to her present policy towards India, but those who know the truth will not chide her for the way in which she has done things there since her policy was once determined.⁷⁵

Booth Tucker, who had served as a Salvation Army Commissioner in India, told an audience at the Hotel Algonquin in New York City that Gandhi would ultimately fail in his self-appointed mission to drive the British out of India, and that the British were the only hope of the underdog there. He said :

Gandhi's policy of passive resistance, civil disobedience or non-cooperation, as it has been variously designated, is not as thoroughly successful as is generally believed.⁷⁶

Philo M. Buck, an Exchange Professor at Baroda College, wrote :

... But, if one may gather evidence during a very few weeks sojourn in upper India through more or less intimate talks with people in the streets and villages, Gandhi's influence may be described as on the wane. There are very few Gandhi caps now seen even in Allahabad which was once almost the centre of the movement.⁷⁷

Of all those who visited India in the early twenties, Gertrude Emerson seems to have made the closest study of the political situation there. She travelled widely and met a variety of

75. *Ibid.*, August 20, 1922.

76. *Ibid.*, October 2, 1921.

77. "The Ferment in India," the *Independent and the Weekly Review*, (November 11, 1922), 264.

people, both officials and non-officials, and on her return she gave her impressions of the situation in a series of long articles published by *Asia*, wherein she showed an honest effort to appraise the movement fairly and objectively. It was her opinion that Gandhi had done his work ; that he had made India self-conscious. She also believed that the Mahatma had given to India a new self-respect and a feeling that she had her own message to contribute to the world. According to Miss Emerson, Gandhi had also equipped India with the will to assume her rightful place among the nations. In spite of the positive aspect of the role of the Mahatma, however, the writer was dubious about the efficacy of his movement in the future.

His programme has been characterised by many negative features ; in some respects it has worked disaster, the reverberating influence of which is still to be calculated and paid for.⁷⁸

The views of Evelyn Roy are particularly noteworthy, for they threw a different light on the Non-Cooperation movement and its implications. She struck at the very root of Gandhian philosophy and characterised it as reactionary and medieval. She believed that the rise of nationalism with a revivalist programme showed a lack of appreciation of the value of human progress made in the epoch of modern civilization. She, therefore, considered Gandhism a reactionary social philosophy, and his movement nothing else but an attempt on the part of the growing Indian mill-owners to extract more concessions from the British to develop their industries. She thought that the masses were only tools in the hands of the Mahatma who exploited their ignorance and backwardness in the interests of the upper class. Miss Roy supported her point of view as follows :

The boycott of foreign cloth constituted the most

78. Emerson, *op. cit.*, p. 609.

important clause of the non-cooperation programme, not only because it coincided with Gandhi's reactionary social philosophy that decried the advent of modern civilization and preached the cult of the spinning-wheel and homespun, but because the backbone of the non-cooperation movement, founded upon sacrifice, suffering and soul-force, was the native mill-owner whose competition to Lancashire products was immensely stimulated by the preaching of the doctrine of boycott of foreign cloth and the wearing of Swadeshi (home-manufactured goods). It was the mill-owners of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras who financed the non-cooperation movement, who, together with the landlords of India represent the rising bourgeoisie which insistently claims for itself a place in the sun.⁷⁹

Miss Roy further maintained that all Gandhi's activities were controlled by Indian capitalists. The Congress fund of ten million rupees⁸⁰ raised in 1921-22 was largely donated by the rising capitalist class of India, to whom the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms did not grant the economic expansion which it craved.

... This fund, largely on paper, constituted the string which controlled the activities and dictated the tactics of the Mahatmaji in critical moments; it lay behind his address to the hooligans of Bombay and Madras; it lay beneath his exhortation "not to make political use of the factory workers;" it constituted the real reason for his failure to declare mass civil disobedience and non-payment of taxes, and for his insistence on the tactics of non-violence and respect for law, order and private property.⁸¹

79. "Gandhi, Revolutionary Mystic," *The Living Age*, (October 20, 1923), 110.

80. About three and one-third million dollars.

81. Roy, *op. cit.*

The attitude of the liberal press as well as of those persons who viewed the aspirations of the Indians with sympathy, was consistent throughout; so also was the attitude of those who indulged in anti-Indian propaganda. But the section of the Press which showed only a passing interest in Indian affairs was greatly influenced in its opinions about the movement by such notorious incidents as the Moplah rebellion, the riots at Bombay at the time of the Prince of Wales's visit, the happenings at Chowri Chawra, and even by the results of the general elections to the Provincial and Central Legislatures and the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi. It was apparent, however, that even those who showed more than a passing interest often found it difficult to correctly appraise the situation due to lack of unbiased views. The Moplah rebellion, the riots on the occasion of the Prince's visit and the Chowri Chawra incident where an infuriated mob of peasants set fire to a police station burning alive several policemen, proved to them the dangerous possibilities of the movement. In this connection, the *New York Times* commented, "Mr. Gandhi makes no appeal to violence; in fact he distinctly preaches against it; but it is clear that his ideas have an explosive power and will have to be handled carefully."⁸² The *Christian Science Monitor*, writing in the same context, said:

The great spread of violence during the past few months has aroused him to a recognition that his movement is getting out of hand, but he still fails to see the reason why. He still fails to see that the great mass of the people to whom he makes his appeal are entirely unable to appreciate the philosophic position which he takes up, whilst for every moderate which Lord Reading wins to his side, a restraining influence is withdrawn from the Non-Cooperation movement.⁸³

82. January 9, 1921.

83. July 7, 1921.

The *Baltimore Sun* remarked:

The passive resistance which brought fame to Gandhi appears to have become unsatisfactory to certain elements in India. They have sought to emulate most of the other restless portions of the earth by taking fire and blood for their arguments.⁸⁴

The *New York Herald* was of the opinion that

. . . it is possible that Gandhi's appeal for order will be heeded. His influence in India is extraordinary and is potent regardless of caste or religion. He is looked on as a saint, even as a divine being. Yet when a mob has drawn blood even the most respected leaders may be ignored when they urge a return to peaceful methods. Passion and fear of retribution unite to put the frenzied men beyond control. Gandhi may have started something he cannot stop.⁸⁵

The *Monitor* commented frequently in the same vein:

Again and again, during the past eighteen months, it has been pointed out in this paper that whilst it might be possible for Mr. Gandhi and his immediate followers to adopt an attitude of "passive suffering" and to avoid anything in the nature of violence, the great mass of the Indian peasantry to which he made his most forcible appeal could not be trusted to exercise any such restraint.⁸⁶

The paper summed up briefly:

On the whole there can be little doubt that the riots and outrages which were deliberately made to

84. August 28, 1921.

85. November 22, 1921.

86. November 26, 1921.

synchronise with the arrival of the Prince of Wales in Bombay will have the effect of clearing the political air to a remarkable extent. It cannot fail to arouse vast numbers of people in India to realize the will-o'-the-wisp they are following and the extent to which they are in danger of casting away the substance for the shadow.⁸⁷

The statement that the riots and outrages were deliberately made to synchronise with the arrival of the Prince in Bombay does not bear scrutiny and indicates lack of knowledge of the true state of affairs in India at that time. Such misrepresentations were bound to creep into the estimations of those papers which commented only sporadically. The *New York Herald* once again remarked, in more vehement terms, laying the entire responsibility for the various violent outbreaks in India on Gandhi's shoulders.

While he has preached non-resistance the blood of thousands lies at his door. To his activities are due beyond any question most of the thirty-five outbreaks in India in the last year. To his incitement must be credited the recent barbarous murder of twenty-one native policemen at Chowri Chawra in the United Provinces. The Mohammedan malcontents who brought about the disastrous clash at Moplah say that Gandhi should breathe chief responsibility of the deaths which resulted. . . . That his campaign of non-resistance and non-cooperation has stirred India as has nothing since the Sepoy mutiny is evident. What may be the end of it all is not now by any means clear, but whatever the result, it will be impossible for Gandhi to escape responsibility for fostering a movement seriously menacing the peace of the world.⁸⁸

87. *Ibid.*

88. *New York Herald*, March 12, 1922.

Surprisingly enough, the news about Gandhi's arrest in March 1922, did not attract as much attention in the American press as might be expected. The Non-Cooperation movement had failed, or at least had not brought forth any appreciable results. The sudden termination of the campaign by Gandhi had a demoralizing effect on his adherents, leaving in its wake a sense of frustration in the country. The Government had used repressive measures to check the movement and had imprisoned people indiscriminately. Nehru wrote:

During the months of December 1921 and January 1922, it is estimated that about thirty thousand persons were sentenced to imprisonment in connection with the Non-Cooperation movement.⁸⁹

Practically all the leaders, including Gandhi, had been arrested by the middle of March, 1922, and thus the movement was leaderless. Besides, the emergence of the Swaraj party, led by C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru, the chief followers of Gandhi, to wreck the 1919 constitution from within the Councils, gave the appearance of a rift in the Congress party. The participation of the Liberals—a party of leaders without followers—created the impression in the American press that the Indians were willing to cooperate with the Government, to the grave detriment of Gandhi's leadership. These factors only confirmed the opinion of the critical press, that Gandhi was a "visionary," and "impractical idealist," and that his movement was doomed to failure. Gandhi seemed to have lost his importance in the opinion of that section of the press which did not view his movement in a favourable light. That perhaps explains the paucity of comment on his arrest.

Liberal opinion, however, was bound to take note of Gandhi's imprisonment. *The New Republic* and *The Nation* came out with sharp criticisms, condemning the British Government. *The Nation* asserted :

89. *Towards Freedom* (New York : The John Day Co., 1942), p. 78.

When an alien government arrests a national hero who, its own apologists admit, is the most saintly figure in the modern world, no further proof is required that it rests its case on naked force.⁹⁰

Condemning British domination of India, the paper volleyed out a barrage of arguments.

... Even so, the protagonists of imperialism, England and America, assure us that there was no other course open to the Government. However clouded England's title, she and she alone, it is asserted, protects India from external invasion and internal chaos and strife. She has brought justice and modern civilization to a country where they could not exist but for her strong arm. The argument is not convincing; it clearly overstates both the evil conditions prior to the British conquest and the blessings of British rule. It attributes material progress solely to alien rule rather than to the general march of science which has coincided with the period of British dominance. At best the imperialist case smacks too much of the argument of the burglar who would justify his continued occupation of another man's house by saying, "I keep order in the household and I keep other burglars out."

The Indians are willing to take the risk of doing that themselves. They believe that they can end the economic drain of an alien rule which has multiplied famines, increased illiteracy, and reduced the people of a land which was once a synonym for wealth to the poorest on earth. They are weary of seeing their sons enlisted and their property taken to fight England's wars. They passionately affirm that in losing native government they have not even gained good government.⁹¹

90. *The Nation*, CXIV (March 22, 1922), 332.

91. *Ibid.*

The New Republic remarked :

It is proverbial that the virtues men most pride themselves on are the virtues they do not possess at all. For generations the British have prided themselves on their genius for governing subject peoples. Perhaps they stammered a bit when they tried to explain Ireland ; but, after all, had they not exhibited marvellous governing intelligence in India ? We are now given an excellent opportunity to determine the quality of that intelligence. The British paraded the Prince of Wales from end to end of India, in the fond hope that in this age of fallen Kings the lands of India would be irrigated with loyal tears. And since this signal mark of British favour did not appear to be appreciated, they have struck out truculently. They have arrested Mahatma Gandhi . . .⁹²

Condemning British rule in India, the paper presented a clear choice for the colonial powers in unmistakable terms :

The age of conquest is past. Humanity is on the march. There seems no escape from the conclusion that the choice before the nations now dominant in the world is terrible but clear. It is a choice between a futile, and in the end fatal, attempt to check by force the drive of the people, and a daring resolution to throw open the gates and lead them into freedom.⁹³

A few months after Gandhi's arrest, *The Nation* again expressed its belief that the Non-Cooperation movement was only marking time and perhaps gathering strength for new effort. It maintained that the fine religious flame which Gandhi had kindled was by no means quenched. But whether active nationalism would press forward along the lines Gandhi had

92. March 22, 1922, 88.

93. *Ibid.*, March 29, 1922.

laid down or would turn to a more or less constitutional struggle to wrest increasing power from the bureaucracy, or break out in violent and probably unsuccessful revolt, it could not predict.

What is certain is that whenever any government lives by confining as common felons ten thousand of the most idealistic and capable of its subjects, it forfeits its right to the respect of mankind and inflicts a grievous wound on society.⁹⁴

Early in 1924, Gandhi fell seriously ill in prison ; he was removed to a hospital and was successfully operated on for appendicitis. The illness had caused great anxiety throughout the country which was soon relieved by his fair recovery and premature and unconditional release on the 5th of February. His doctors advised him rest near the seashore, and consequently he stayed at Juhu, near Bombay, to recuperate. His release, however, brought him neither rest nor peace. He was involved in the controversy between the no-changers and the pro-changers in the Congress—each group wanting him on its side. The so-called “Juhu talks” ensued between Gandhi and C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru. So far as the Swarajists were concerned, the talks did not succeed in winning over Gandhi. With all the friendly and courteous talk, both parties agreed to differ. Gandhi justified the Council entry by the Swarajists on the basis of the Delhi and Cocanada resolutions, permitting those Congressmen who had no conscientious scruples to enter the Legislatures if they so desired. He exhorted the no-changers to observe perfect neutrality and not to indulge in any kind of anti-Swarajist propaganda, and to busy themselves with the constructive social programme laid down by him.

The Hindu-Muslim friction has ever been a canker in Indian politics, and it took its ugliest form in the later vivisection of the

94. June 7, 1922, 663.

country. During the early twenties, in spite of the support of the Hindus to the cause of Khilafat, relations between the two communities, notwithstanding all efforts to the contrary by their leaders, deteriorated from the end of the year 1922. During 1923 there was progressive deterioration of Hindu-Muslim relations, especially in north India. In the beginning of 1924, the malady became acute and assumed an epidemic form. Riots broke out in a number of big cities, with all their callousness and brutality. The beautiful structure of goodwill and friendship, so assiduously built up by Gandhi with the help and co-operation of the Ali brothers and other Muslim leaders, seemed to crumble. Frivolous causes, which could have been settled with mutual consideration for each other's feelings, were enough to incite the groups on either side. Behind these misguided people were the hands of the interested parties. Commenting on the problem, Jawaharlal Nehru wrote :

It is perfectly true, however, that communal tension and bitterness increased in the city masses. This was pushed on by the communal leaders at the top, and it was reflected in the stiffening up of the political communal demands. Because of the communal tension, Muslim political reactionaries, who had taken a back seat during all these years of non-cooperation, emerged into prominence, helped in the process by the British Government. From day to day, new and more far-reaching communal demands appeared on their behalf, striking at the very root of national unity and Indian freedom. On the Hindu side also, political reactionaries were among the principal communal leaders, and, in the name of guarding Hindu interests, they played definitely into the hands of the Government.⁹⁵

The communal riots shook Gandhi tremendously, and he enjoined upon himself a twenty-one day fast to expiate the

95. *Jawaharlal, An Autobiography*, p. 135.

guilt of his blundering brethren. Advantage was taken of the fast to call together leading Indians of all communities at a Unity Conference which sat from September 20th to October 2nd, 1924. The bitter feelings of the warring factions were toned down to a considerable extent.

The closing of the year 1924 witnessed a change in the policy of Mahatma Gandhi. He came round to the way of thinking of C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru. In a statement, he declared that in order to secure the cooperation of all parties, the programme of non-cooperation should be suspended as a national programme, except insofar as it related to the refusal to wear foreign cloth, and that while different sections should devote themselves to different fields of constructive work, the Swaraj Party should work in the Councils. Thus the Non-Cooperation movement was suspended by the Mahatma.

It might be said in passing that although the movement did not show any tangible results, it gave a few rude shocks to the British, and although not a single boycott was anywhere thorough, every one of them diminished the prestige of the institution boycotted. But in spite of the lack of any tangible results, it could be said that the greatest achievement of the movement was the boycott of violence. In spite of the few outbreaks, it could in all fairness be maintained that the non-violence creed of the Mahatma had kept in check, to a great extent, the tendency of the people to resort to violence, even under provocation.

The politics of the year 1925 centred around Council work. The activities of the Swarajists were no longer hampered by the no-changers. In none of the Provincial Legislatures except in the Central Provinces did the Swarajists enjoy clear majorities. While in certain Provinces they represented the strongest individual group, in others they held only a handful of seats. In the Central Legislature they succeeded in capturing just under half the elected seats in the Assembly.

The activities of the Swarajist Party varied from Province to Province. In the Central Provinces where they were in a majority, they could have formed a Ministry and wreck the

Constitution from within. Although they abstained from forming a government, they made it impossible for the Constitution to work by consistent obstructive tactics. The Governor was obliged to rule the Province by the emergency powers conferred upon him by the Act of 1919. The official view of the situation was:

Had full effect been given to the Council's vote, colleges and schools would have been closed; the work of hospitals and dispensaries would have come to a standstill; roads and buildings would no longer have been kept in repair; and thousands of officials belonging to various grades in the Provincial Services would have been dismissed. In a word, from the point of view of the general public, government would have been limited to the bare requirements of law and order.⁹⁶

In other Provinces the Swarajists were less successful. In Bengal they formed a coalition and thus oftentimes placed the administration in serious and embarrassing situations. In others they were successful at times, in combination with other parties, in exerting some pressure on the Executive.

While in the Provincial sphere, the Swarajists were successful in wrecking the Constitution in two Provinces (the Central Provinces and Bengal), their activities in the Assembly were the dominating feature of the sessions of the Central Legislature. They took active interest in the deliberations of the Assembly, walked into the lobbies now with one party, then with another, and occasionally with the Government.

The year 1925 also witnessed a change in the attitude of the Congress. Mr. C. R. Das declared his willingness to cooperate with the Government, provided some real responsibility was transferred to the people. The atmosphere in the

96. *India in 1923-24*, a statement prepared for presentation to Parliament under the requirement of the Government of India Act (Calcutta: Government of India Central Publication Branch, 1924), p. 271.

country was different from that of 1921. Before the talk of cooperation could bring any fruitful results, Mr. Das died suddenly on the 16th of June. With his death, the country lost a valiant fighter.

For about five years, from 1922 to 1927, Indian politics was at a low ebb. As has already been noted, the Non-Cooperation movement was withdrawn by Gandhi. Thus it happened that the predominant role played by the Congress was within the Councils. The political atmosphere in the country was full of bickering, for lack of any constructive programme, and the history of the Indian politics during this period was a monotonous tale of pious resolutions passed at the annual sessions of the Indian National Congress and a perpetual strife between various members and groups within the organization. Under such circumstances, Indian affairs were not likely to evoke much interest in America. The Council work and the predominant activity of the Congress, though of some importance to India, were hardly taken note of by the American press. Therefore, one finds with the political stalemate in India, a gradual fading away of interest by the American press in Indian affairs. The lack of news on Indian problems and also the absence of comment by the press was discernible from the middle of 1924, after the release of Mahatma Gandhi. This was amply borne out by *The Nation* :

Except in the event of battle, murder or sudden death, India hardly appears on the horizon of American news. Our knowledge of that strange land is a series of shocking incidents—whether of great beauty or great horror. The Black Hole of Calcutta, Amritsar, the Akali trouble, Tagore, Gandhi. Yet significant though seemingly unimportant events are occurring with great rapidity.⁹⁷

97. October 1, 1924, 322.

The Simon Commission and The First Round Table Conference

At the beginning of 1928, the whole country was awakened, as if from slumber, by the arrival of the Simon Commission on Indian soil. The Commission, appointed by the British Government, was charged with the duty of inquiring into the workings of the system of Government, the growth of education and the development of representative institutions in British India, as well as of reporting whether and to what extent it was desirable to establish the principle of responsible government or to extend, modify or restrict the degree of responsible government then existing.

The composition of the Commission was highly resented by Indians of practically all shades of opinion. It was appointed by a Conservative Ministry and consisted of three Conservatives, two Liberals and two Labour Members of Parliament. The Indians had looked forward to this Commission as promising to uncover, for the British people, the defects of the Reforms. They were astonished to find that no Indian was included in its membership. The Indian National Congress feared that the Indian people could not look for sympathetic understanding of their problems from a Commission consisting entirely of Englishmen, most of them Conservatives and all of them profiting indirectly from the British control of India's finances

and trade. The Indian National Congress, at its annual session in 1927, during Christmas week at Madras, passed a resolution to boycott the Statutory Commission, in the following words :

Whereas the British Government have appointed the Statutory Commission in utter disregard of India's right of self-determination ;

This Congress resolves that the only self-respecting course for India to adopt is to boycott the Commission at every stage and in every form.¹

When the Commission landed at Bombay on February 3rd, 1928, it found black flags flying throughout the city. The boycott began with an all-India "hartal" as a sign of mourning. The Commission toured all over the country, visiting important cities, and wherever it went, it was greeted with black flags and hostile demonstrations with placards and banners bearing the slogan, "Go back, Simon." The Government tried to subdue the demonstrations with coercion and terrorism. Important leaders like Lala Lajpat Rai and Jawaharlal Nehru suffered physical injuries at the hands of the police. At some places mounted police were employed to disperse the demonstrators, causing severe injuries to many. In the official Congress history, the situation in Lucknow was described in some detail :

Lucknow was converted into an armed camp with thousands of mounted and foot police, and for four days there were brutal attacks by the police. Private houses were invaded by the police and respected National workers were beaten and arrested for daring to call out, "Simon, go back."²

1. Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 318.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 321.

Jawaharlal Nehru gave a vivid account of the cavalry charge at Lucknow :

The place was full of foot and mounted police, as well as military. The crowd of sympathetic onlookers swelled up, and many of these persons managed to spread out in twos and threes in the open space. Suddenly we saw in the far distance a moving mass. It was two or three long lines of cavalry or mounted police, covering the entire area, galloping down towards us, and striking and riding down the numerous stragglers that dotted the maidan (the open space). That charge of galloping horsemen was a fine sight, but for the tragedies that were being enacted on the way as harmless and very much surprised sightseers went under the horses' hoofs. Behind the charging lines these people lay on the ground, some still unable to move, others writhing in pain, and the whole appearance of that maidan was that of a battlefield.³

The Commission left India on the 31st of March, 1928, after establishing, as Sir John Simon said, "personal contact with all communities and classes in various parts of India."⁴ It returned in October 1928 and remained until April 1929. The boycott continued on the second visit also.

The arrival of the Simon Commission in India and its consequent boycott attracted a great deal of attention in the American press. Practically all the important newspapers throughout the country displayed the news on their front pages, notable among them being the *New York Times*, the *New York Herald Tribune*, the *Springfield Daily Republican*, the *Baltimore Sun*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Atlanta Constitution*. But in spite of the prominence given to the news, very few papers made any editorial comment whatsoever. In the entire press

3. *Toward Freedom*, p. 136.

4. Sitaramayya, *op. cit.*, p. 321.

one would not find more than half a dozen comments on the Statutory Commission's visit. Of these few, the *New York Times* wrote :

Popular disturbances have attended the arrival in India of the Simon Commission. Hindu communities are proclaiming the days of mourning. It is illustrative of the wrong-headed attitude of this Nationalist opposition that Ramsay MacDonald was burned in effigy at Bombay along with Premier Baldwin, Lord Birkenhead and Sir John Simon. The British Labor Party has been the strongest champion in England of India's claims and rights. But the Labor Party refuses to see in the make-up of the present Commission the injustice and the slight to native susceptibilities which the extremists have discerned. Mr. MacDonald has openly stigmatized this state of mind as an obsolete psychology. He is therefore now classified as an enemy of India.⁵

It was Mr. MacDonald's argument that in making the Commission all-British, there was really a larger concession to Indian rights than if one or two Indian members had been included. The *Times* shared the view of Mr. MacDonald. Soon after the arrival of the Commission in India, Sir John Simon addressed a letter⁶ to the Viceroy, proposing that the Commission take the form of a Joint Free Conference between the English seven and an Indian seven to be chosen by the Central Legislature. The Provincial Councils were also asked to constitute similar bodies. The proposal evoked no response. It would have made the Indian Committee assessors or appraisers rather than jurors, a position which was not acceptable to the Congress Party. The *Times* failed to understand this point of view and remarked :

5. February 6, 1928.

6. Dated 6th February and published in the Indian press on February 7, 1928

Actually, therefore, the contemplated procedure allows greater scope for the expression of native opinions than if the Commission included representatives of India to be "coerced" or "cajoled" or otherwise swayed by the British majority. It comes close to being a form of treaty negotiation between the peoples of Great Britain and India.⁷

The *Philadelphia Inquirer* was of the opinion that the boycott of the Commission was a failure :

Some of the reforms instituted under the Montagu scheme proved unsound and unworkable. The attempt to placate native politicians has weakened the whole system upon which the effective government of the country depends. It has encouraged the attitude of hostility revealed by Hindu demonstrations against the parliamentary Commission on its arrival in Bombay.⁸

The paper further remarked that there had been a certain change of popular sentiments which the Muslim element was doing its best to foster, and it concluded :

The attempt to boycott the Commission has apparently failed and this is a sign of good omen. There are many Indians who believe that they have a better chance of justice at the hands of a British Commission than at the hands of their own countrymen. If Sir John Simon and his colleagues fulfil expectations, they should be able to do a great service for India.⁹

On the other hand, the *Christian Science Monitor* differed from the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and wrote that the Reforms had

7. February 6, 1928.

8. February 7, 1928.

9. *Ibid.*

borne fruit and that Indians were enjoying a greater share than ever before in the government of their country, but agreed with the latter's appraisal of the boycott of the Commission and said :

Once more it appears that the situation in British India is not so hopeless as certain recent dispatches would lead one to believe. The way still lies open to peaceable negotiation, progress and reform. The parliamentary commission whose work was threatened with delay if not with failure by the attitude of agitators and revolutionaries, has attained a primary success. . . . The Swarajist leaders preached a suspension of all work. When the day arrived for the strike or "hartal" to become effective, it was not universally nor even generally observed. The students and agitators, exasperated at the failure of the boycott, attacked those Indians who remained at their work. Order was restored by the police and in some instances by the military.¹⁰

The *Living Age* saw in the happenings in India a different story. Commenting on the boycott of the Simon Commission, it remarked :

The English press have vainly tried to avoid discussing the significance of recent events in India. Although the English censor still prevents our getting a clear picture of what is going on, it is at least clear that anti-imperialist strikes and demonstrations are taking place in all parts of the country. The big cities of India are now in a state of siege. English armoured automobiles circulate through the streets and English police fire at parading demonstrators who have here and there embarked upon a barricaded warfare with the armed powers of English imperialism.¹¹

10. February 9, 1928.

11. April 1, 1928. 584.

The first volume of the Simon Commission Report was published on June 10, 1930. It was meant to be a "Survey Document" carrying background information for circulation among the general public. The framers of the Report maintained :

The problems connected with the future constitutional development of India are of such complexity and importance that we are unwilling to see our proposal for their treatment thrown into the arena of discussion and controversy before there has been time to examine and digest the survey of the present position on which our recommendations are based, and in the light of which we believe them to be justified.¹²

The Report was a carefully compiled document entailing two and a half years of expert labour. Palm Dutt, commenting on the Report, said :

This memorable document of State begins by coolly declaring that "what is called the Indian Nationalist Movement" in reality "directly affects the hopes of a very small fraction of the teeming peoples of India."¹³

The authors of the Report went to great pains to indicate the background of Indian society, the differences of race, culture, religion and language, describing the immensity of the task of the British Government and the necessity of a slow pace of advance toward the goal of self-government. The data presented were persuasive, thus conforming to the oft-repeated contention that India was a conglomeration of irreconcilable races, cultures, languages and religions. That the document was of a convincing nature to one not closely

12. Quoted from the *London Daily Herald*, June 10, 1930.

13. R. Palm Dutt, *India Today* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1940), p. 255.

familiar with India, was not surprising. It was a fitting testimony to the genius of Sir John Simon, who was considered to be one of the most acute brains of England, a person of unrivalled distinction at the Bar. No one could doubt his competence for the task. How far the Commission was qualified to judge the fate of more than 300 million people was, however, an entirely different question. In this connection, Savel Zimand remarked :

The remark hurled at American tourists—that no one can really understand India without a long residence in the country—was entirely forgotten and the British members, without “preconceived ideas,” sailed for Bombay.¹⁴

Many shared the views of Richard B. Gregg who stated :

There are in it (the Report) some distortions of emphasis amounting almost to omissions of pertinent facts, but these were probably intentional. The impression it made upon England and upon the United States was that India presents a problem of tremendous extent and complexity. The London Spectator aptly describes it as a “Book of Difficulties.” The picture of India split into a medley of divided castes, religions, sects, parties and classes was eagerly received by British opinion. It coincided with prior reports and unconscious British hopes.¹⁵

The Report evoked some interest in the American press, both in the dailies and in the periodicals. It may be noted that the findings of the Commission only confirmed the preconceived notions of those who viewed Indian problems with a critical and unsympathetic eye. Who could question the

14. “India Rejects Simon Report,” *The New Republic*, July 9, 1930, 199.

15. “The Empire Dies Hard,” *The Nation*, July 9, 1930, 36.

validity of the arguments put forward by one of the ablest lawyers of England and his colleagues? The Report was the outcome of two and a half years of hard labour by men whose integrity was beyond question.

The *Baltimore Sun* felt that the British Government approached the Indian problem with "a magnificent intelligence."¹⁶

All the information in the Report was grouped under separate and appropriate headings and was well documented and buttressed by the testimony of a host of witnesses both official and private,¹⁷ both Indian and Anglo-Indian. This gave the Report a stamp of authority beyond question.

An extraordinarily and complete summing up of the facts upon which the British Government is about to base a momentous decision in regard to India is contained in the report just published by what is known as the "Simon Commission."¹⁸

From the above observations, one can easily gauge the trend of opinion in America. Excepting the liberal section of the press, the opinions expressed agreed with the observations made in the Report. Some papers fortified their contentions with the very arguments used in the Report, and quite a few even used the same language. No one could tell them, now, that they were wrong or that their arguments were not based on sound facts, for did not the Commission think in the same terms as they? This community of thought gave a community of approach to the Indian problem. Thus, one finds that all those who commented on the Report, with the solitary exception of the *Springfield Daily Republican*, came to the conclusion that the task of the institution of self-government in India was beset with colossal difficulties and that the pace of the Reforms should be slow.

16. June 11, 1930.

17. As previously noted, the Indian National Congress dissociated itself from the Commission.

18. The *Christian Science Monitor*, June 12, 1930.

Some of the comments were sharp in tone, a vindication of the stand previously taken. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* commented just how much harm had been done by the promise of immediate Dominion status for India, to which the native leaders replied with a demand for complete independence, might be gathered from the first volume of the voluminous report of the Simon Commission. The paper held that the Commission's examination of existing conditions made it sufficiently clear that in its (the Commission's) view the working out of self-government should be a gradual process. The paper felt that that was the opinion of practically everyone who was familiar with the history of the Indian peoples, and concluded :

Though self-government must be the ultimate ideal, it would be futile to overlook the many difficulties in the way of its realization. Among these are the caste system, the racial and religious animosities, the illiterate character of a large part of the population and the existence side by side of British territory and quasi-independent native States. The criticism of British rule comes mainly from the educated few who are impatient of any delay in establishing their political authority. How far the masses sympathize with these aspirations may be doubted. They may be aroused from their "pathetic contentment" by movements like Gandhi's, but they have no clear idea of the use they would make of greater liberty if they had it. In this fact may be found, perhaps, the real problem of India.¹⁹

The *Kansas City Star* observed that the reaction to the first volume of the Simon Commission's Report had been largely what was to be expected, and that while awaiting the recommendations to be published in the second volume two weeks thence, each interested group was interpreting the contents of the first in accordance with its own desires. Thus, according to this paper's view, the Indian Nationalists—who were committed to

19. June 11, 1930.

complete independence—argued that the Commission had simply insulted their country, and they were prepared to use the report as campaign material to illustrate the perfidy of Great Britain. Summing up the situation, the *Star* said :

If the dissatisfaction proves to be general and is not removed by the recommendations embodied in the second volume, the position of the British Government in India will be made increasingly difficult At a distance the statement of the situation in India, as presented by the Simon Commission, sounds eminently unbiased and reasonable. If the recommendations to Parliament are made in the same spirit, confidence may be placed in the wisdom of the Commission's plan. Unfortunately, conditions may have passed the point where wise counsels will peacefully prevail.²⁰

In the opinion of the *Baltimore Sun*, the appearance of the Indian Statutory Commission's report at that juncture in Indian affairs was an event of the greatest interest and importance. It observed :

The report ranges over an immense field, and it covers and it presents its pictures with exact and impartial statement. And one must confess that even a cursory knowledge of those facts appalls one by showing the magnitude of England's task and the responsibility in attempting to establish the principle of responsible government, the complexity and vastness of the consequences of India's own quest for freedom. . . . The actual recommendations may disappoint either or both sides, or they may fail of being applicable. But it is impossible to feel after the first half of the report that less than a brilliant and sincere effort is being made to bring satisfactory order out of almost maddening complications.²¹

20. June 11, 1930.

21. June 11, 1930.

The *New York Times* had an editorial entitled "Preliminary Report on India," in which it said :

Particularly striking is the obvious effort of the Simon Commission to rid itself of English presumptions, and to penetrate beneath the strange and alien surface to a real understanding of the character and aspirations of the native population. . . . While no positive conclusions are drawn from the data gathered, the whole spirit of this part of the report is one of anxiety to discover the truth and to set it forth in all its legitimate implications. If the Independence party in India resents and denounces this tactful and appreciative effort to understand the real political problem of India, it shows itself capable of disregarding the interest and advice of sincere and loyal friends.²²

The *Christian Science Monitor*, which had always struck a sympathetic cord to Britain's attitude toward the Indian problem, felt satisfied that the personnel of the Commission had been such as to inspire confidence in England from the first, alike as regards its impartiality and its competence, and drew attention to the fact that at its head had been Sir John Simon, a highly esteemed Cabinet Minister not belonging either to the party which was responsible for the original appointment of the Commission or to that of the Labour Government then in office. In its opinion, the non-political character of the undertaking was further emphasized on the occasion of the general election while the investigation was proceeding. The methods adopted by the Commission in carrying out the task entrusted to it had continuously justified the initial confidence in it, basing its contention on the fact that the members had visited India and spent many months taking evidence from representatives of all the chief communities and interests concerned, excepting only those Nationalists who declined the invitation to cooperate. It concluded :

22. June 11, 1930.

Meanwhile, however, it is not difficult to read between the lines that the Commission, while aiming at helping forward the development of institutions in India as energetically as possible, finds that progress must necessarily be slow, in the interests of law and order, having regard to the still prevailing intensity of racial, religious, tribal and national animosities which the strong hand of the British Administration keeps in check at present.²³

The New York *Herald Tribune* observed that with the first waves of Indian denunciation already breaking over the preparatory volume of the Simon Commission report, there seemed little likelihood that its almost painfully temperate discussion of the actualities in India would receive much consideration, and that even in the most dispassionate atmosphere its many closely printed pages would take time and thought to digest. Considering the enormous extent of Indian territory, the vast numbers of its many different peoples with their different languages and customs, and the great complex of social, economic and political organizations which had to be studied, the report was, in this paper's view, a really remarkable summary and deserved attention. In an editorial it pointed out an apparent omission in the Report :

There is a great deal in the volume essential to any real understanding of India. But there is one notable omission. India is discussed dispassionately, at arm's length, as it were, and in the tone of asking nothing save what will be best for her people. Yet it must be obvious that a very real factor in the problem is the repercussion upon Great Britain and British interests of what happens in India. The report shows how great are the difficulties in the way of granting further self-government to India. It is silent upon the dangers, if any, of not granting further self-government.

23. June 12, 1930.

The danger that the city leaders (who would control any independent government) might be imposing tariffs to injure the real interests of the great agricultural population is mentioned. The possibility that an independent government might injure Great Britain with such tariffs is not discussed. Possibly such considerations do not really influence English thought, but the failure even to suggest that they could exist must be irritating to Indian politicians, and to foreign readers it seems a gap in the complete picture.²⁴

The remark that "the possibility that an independent government might injure Great Britain with such tariffs is not discussed," indicates the confusion which prevailed in certain quarters in the United States in their approach to India. This paper was under the misapprehension that the dose of self-government which Britain thought fit to allow would place Indians in a position to impose tariffs detrimental to British interests. That the Simon Commission failed to take note of this fact was not because the matter was not considered to be of any importance : it just did not come into the picture at all. The protection of British interests in India had always been at the forefront whenever the exigencies of the changing times demanded a revision of the approach and a change of policy towards India. As a matter of fact, the entire foreign policy of Great Britain, particularly with respect to the Middle and Far East, centred around the security of British interests in India. No one with any knowledge of the British colonial policy—a sphere in which Indians could be safely presumed to be quite familiar—could consider the British naive enough wilfully to give into the hands of the Indians powers which would have ultimately injured the British vested interests. The whole approach to the Indian problem was probably coloured by the misconception—which was

24. June 11, 1930.

deliberately propagated—that the British were on a civilizing mission, that the people living in colonies on a stage of civilization different from the western people would be trained and led on the road to the much-cherished goal of self-government by successive steps to be determined by the British Government—an arduous journey beset with all manner of traps, snares and pitfalls and necessitating expert guidance and slow pace. The Simon Report was a survey of the road ahead to convey to the British Government the various difficulties, coupled with complex and intricate problems involved in the venture, in order to enable the Government to judge the ability of the Indians to traverse the path without undue strain. This all-absorbing, noble mission of the British in India, in the pursuit of which the mundane consideration of tariffs did not influence British thought, was perhaps responsible for the remarks of the New York *Herald Tribune*.

As has already been noted, the *Springfield Daily Republican* struck a different note and revealed a sincere effort to understand the issues involved. It maintained that under the actual conditions, the case was not so simple as that, and there might be some excuse for the suspicion expressed in India that the method followed was chosen to block reform by accentuating the difficulties in the way of reform. Judging from the extracts of the first report reaching America, the paper felt the problem fairly bristled with numerous obstacles, and whether or not its separate publication was intended to surround the subject with an atmosphere of pessimism, the first comments in the London press suggested that it was having just that effect. Summing up, the paper observed:

With the whole of exploited Asia awakening with unlooked-for rapidity, it may not be possible to wait for the ideal step-by-step progress toward dominion status which the Commission urges. Timely concessions may be required to keep the situation from getting out of control, and at such critical times the greatest

danger may be the slowness of a well-meaning ruling power in carrying out long-overdue reforms.²⁵

It is apparent from the above that the first volume of the Simon Commission's report was very favourably received by the daily press in America. The criticism came mostly from the periodicals, particularly those holding liberal views, for they did not take for granted the findings of the Commission as emanating from sources which could not be questioned. The attitude of Gandhi, to whom even his British opponents had paid tribute for honesty and sincerity, and the anxiety shown by the British Government for establishing self-governing institutions in India—broadly borne out by various pronouncements of the Government and the convening of the Round Table Conference—were hard for some to reconcile with the halting approach of the Commission and raised doubts in the minds of quite a few. The *Christian Century* of Chicago, commenting on this aspect of the Report, foreshadowed what was to come:

... The fact that the report opens with a reiteration of the same promises that were included in the Montagu-Chelmsford proposals of 1918, again emphasizing the fact that the grant of self-government depends upon the guarantees of maintenance of order or of the important British commercial interests in India (for this is what, in the last analysis, is meant by the safeguarding of the prosperity of the country) plainly foreshadows a report so cautious and so hedged about with reservations as to fail to satisfy most considerable body of Indian opinion.²⁶

Time magazine had a sling on Gandhi:

Vague though it is, the No. 1 section of the Simon

25. June 12, 1930.

26. June 18, 1930, 771.

Report slams the door on St. Gandhi's demand for independence now.²⁷

The Nation carried a short editorial wherein it stated that the Report did not contain the promised definite proposals:

The report is thoroughly temperate and friendly in spirit, but the question whether India will any longer accept government by England is another matter.²⁸

The Report caused great excitement in England. There was almost unanimous opinion that India must go slowly toward her goal of self-government. The *Daily Herald*, the MacDonald Government's organ, wrote that in the light of the Simon Report, there would be protests that the difficulties were so great that Britain's promises were impossible of fulfilment. But it added:

To give way to faint hearts, to inventors of excuses, to advocates of mailed fists, would be perfidy and cowardice of the first order.²⁹

The difficulties appearing in the Report had not only been noted by a section of the British press, but had been emphasized with some force.

For, merely as a comprehensive study of the facts, it is sufficient to demonstrate a dozen times over the total impractical character of all demands for solving the constitutional problem on the lines of complete self-government at short notice.³⁰

27. June 23, 1930, 23.

28. June 18, 1930, 689.

29. June 10, 1930.

30. *The Daily Telegraph*, June 10, 1930.

Lord Rothermere's *Daily Mail* considered the Report a parliamentary document of overwhelming importance and maintained that there was nothing in its pages affording "the faintest countenance to the policy of holding out hopes to the Indian extremists, fulfilment of which would mean the ruin of India and the British Empire."³¹ The London *Times*, which considered the unanimity of the Report a great achievement, said editorially that the best service it could render was by publishing a special supplement containing a careful abridgement, suggesting that the public ought to form its views on that basis.³²

The *Morning Post* said: "This survey is so carefully balanced and so judicially vague that it is difficult to see to what it leads."³³ The liberal *News Chronicle* was among those journals supporting home rule, fearing no adverse reaction. The proof that Indians were capable of the practical application of home rule, it said, was seen in the tribute the Commission paid to the way in which Indians had worked, under difficult conditions, those institutions established in 1919. It summed up: "These institutions may not have worked perfectly, but they have worked, and that is the answer to the pretence that the Indians are incapable of self-government."³⁴

The Indian press, on the other hand, was bitter about the Report and considered it an insult and a slighting of the national aspiration. The Moderates, too, were disappointed and hoped that the main report would show a considerable advance if it was to be well-received. The reaction in India was correctly appraised by the *New York Times*:

The Simon Commission "insults India," "Dominion Status in the dim and distant future," "India not a Nation," "British domination to continue." Headings

31. June 10, 1930.

32. June 10, 1930.

33. June 10, 1930.

34. June 10, 1930.

such as these, glaring across the front pages of the leading Swarajist newspapers of India today, epitomize the feelings of the Congress extremists toward the first volume of the much-heralded Simon Commission report on India.³⁵

An official resume of the first instalment of the Report appeared in most of the English language newspapers of India. With the exception of the strictly English-owned journals, which usually supported the Government in its hours of difficulty, however, the document was almost universally rejected as failing entirely to meet the national aspirations of the people.

The eagerly-awaited second volume of the Report came out on the 24th of June, 1930. After the excitement created in England by the first volume, it drew some sober comment. A number of papers in London saw a stormy voyage ahead for the Report, and many, including *The Times*, were sceptical of its acceptance without some modifications. In the words of the *Daily Herald*, "It has evaded the main issue."³⁶ Speaking presumably with the authority of a spokesman for the party then in power, the paper boldly stated :

Premier MacDonald's remedy still, we feel sure, remains unchanged since he wrote it three years ago—"India must be in the Empire on equal terms." Along that courageous line, not among the hesitations of the Simon Report, the two countries will find a solution of the problems that face them . . . Its proposal, so far from preparing the way to rapid transformation, seems to us to tend rather to an indefinite stabilizing on the essential points of final authority and power in the present system.³⁷

The Commission's proposals concerning the powers of the

35. June 11, 1930.

36. June 24, 1930.

37. *Ibid.*

Viceroy and the Provincial Governors appeared to be stumbling blocks in the working of democracy. This view was voiced by this Socialist organ. This, it said, was

... a negation of the machinery of self-government which elsewhere the Commissioners advocate. Here is the fatal weakness of the report—fatal not only to all hopes of its acceptance, even by moderate Indian opinion, but fatal to all value in its present situation. It has evaded the main problem.³⁸

The London *Times*, which throughout had been wholly sympathetic with Sir John Simon and his colleagues in their task, said it was conceivable that their proposals might be

... profoundly modified hereafter as they pass through the mesh of refining and critical procedure—the Round Table Conference, the Joint Parliamentary Committee and the Parliamentary debates—which is to be interposed before there is any question of legislation.... The conclusions do fit the facts with the unanswerable logic, and the result is a scheme of self-government fitted to the special conditions of the case and not limited except by safeguards against its own collapse, which marks the most helpful advance of our generation towards the solution of the problem of India.³⁹

The liberal views, as expressed in an editorial in the *News Chronicle*, were generous :

The proposals bring within sight an all-India constitution of the only kind suited to that vast country. It can only grow of itself ; nobody can foretell the

38. *Ibid.*

39. June 24, 1930.

precise dates of the season. Those understanding India's situation can hardly allow the opportunity to escape to shape an act which should be the commencement of the last phase in India's political development.⁴⁰

The second volume of the Report drew more comment from the American press than did the first. Their general trend, unlike that in the British press, was the same as in the case of the first volume. The editorials displayed only a superficial understanding of the implications of the recommendations made. What impressed the majority of the papers most was that the membership of the Commission was comprised of representatives of all the political parties, that there was unanimity of opinion and that the Report was the result of two and a half years of hard labour on the part of men aptly qualified for the job, rather than the points of issue described by the Commission, the nature of the reforms recommended and whether they made a substantial advance towards the ideal proclaimed by the Government, the ideal of instituting self-government in India. The Americans, as a matter of fact, took the Report on its face value, and the comments made were in most cases the summaries of opinions expressed by the Commission itself. It is surprising that the conservative British press was more critical than the American. And if it is conceded that the British press was more concerned than the American about Indian affairs, then the remark made above—that the American press showed a superficial knowledge of the whole affair—would not be inappropriate. It should be noted, however, that the liberal section of the American press did not fall in line with the general trend.

Of all the papers, the *New York Times* showed the greatest interest:

From the beginning it is evident that the commissioners approached their heavy and complicated task

40. June 24, 1930.

with kindly recognition of the aspirations of the people of India.”⁴¹

Among the merits of the Report, the *Times* took special note of the fact that although the Commission was legally empowered, if it saw fit, “to recommend withdrawing a certain degree of the home rule which had been granted to India,” nothing of that tenor appeared in the Report. Regarding the question of defence, it said in the same article :

National defense is not to be turned over to native hands. In fact, they do not desire it. Even the party in India which demands immediate independence has been willing to leave the military power under the control of Great Britain.

As has been noted already, the session of the Indian National Congress, held in Lahore in the last week of December, 1929, changed its goal from Swaraj to complete independence. If complete independence meant that the defense of future independent India was to be the responsibility of Great Britain, the point was not made clear by Jawaharlal Nehru, the President-elect of the Congress in that year, or by Gandhi or by any other responsible leader of the Congress. One is inclined to believe that complete independence, as proclaimed by the Congress, meant the severance of relations with Great Britain, political as well as defense.

On the same day the *Times* expressed its views editorially, it published a dispatch from its London correspondent who sounded a different note. It said that the Report made it plain on almost every page that Britain did not intend to relax her control, although she invited India to embark on one of the safest constitutional experiments of modern times. The correspondent concluded :

Despite all its emphasis on self-rule for the

41. June 24, 1930.

provinces, the scheme is to give Britain a stronger hold on India than ever. For the present at least, the British governors in the provinces will be virtual autocrats with sweeping powers to override their Indian ministers. The control of the police is handed to Indian officials, but the Governors can call the British troops in any emergency.⁴²

The *Springfield Daily Republican* remarked that the second and concluding volume of the huge report on India by the Statutory Commission was by no means so discouraging as was rather generally expected from the bristling array of difficulties enumerated in the first volume :

. . . . A first reading suggests that the principles laid down might be adequate for the gradual development on sound lines of the self-government within the Empire which would probably satisfy all but the extremists in India.⁴³

Summing up and commenting upon the special powers of the Governor-General, it observed that the fact that the strings giving the Viceroy power to do what he thought necessary in an emergency were provided for in the plan, was a matter of course, but they were not too conspicuous and by degrees as India gained in solidarity and power, they could be relinquished. The Report in this paper's opinion, did point out a road to progress if the way was not blockedly inflamed national feeling.

The *Philadelphia Inquirer* remarked :

The report is a long one in which every phase of the subject is considered The character of the Commission as representing all three parties should secure

42. *Ibid.*

43. June 24, 1930.

an impartial study of its recommendations. It is in every sense a document of the first importance.⁴⁴

The New York *Herald Tribune* remarked that the "momentous recommendations" of the Simon Commission clearly opened the door to self-government in India perceptibly wider, although they gave no immediate promise of the graduation of India to Dominion status. The Report recommended a restriction of the powers of the provincial Governor to a point where the Indians could work out their own salvation without outside aid or hindrance, but if an emergency were to arise, it was essential that the King's Government should none the less be carried on. It further observed that the "reserved" subjects, which had been such a fruitful source of contention, were turned over wholly to the provincial Governments, even including the police. There, too, an emergency would enable British power to assert itself, but the Indians would have a fairly free opportunity to show what they could do, it believed. Summing up, the paper added that wide powers.

... still rests on the Secretary of State for India in Council, the Governor General in Council with the permission of the Secretary of State, and the "Instrument of Instructions to Governors." If these officials still retain much of their power for carrying on the King's government. It is also true that the Indians receive enlarged opportunities of participation which should enable them to give the world some idea of their capacity for self-government.⁴⁵

The *Kansas City Star* maintained that the Report was a document of great importance not only for the future of India but for the development of the British Commonwealth of

44. June 24, 1930.

45. June 24, 1930.

Nations, though it did not recommend giving her Dominion status at once :

... It does not, however, affect the major problem at the moment. The whole report will inevitably be judged now upon how far it meets the Indian demands and may be expected to detach moderate support from the rebellion.⁴⁶

The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* said that the Report was halting in its recommendations :

For 300 pages the Simon Commission maps a program for an ideal government of India. But it does not set a date when this ideal can be realized. Herein the report will displease the Nationalists who think Britain has already delayed far too long.⁴⁷

In its view it was a thoroughly British report, conscientious, painstaking, fair; that the members had not been swayed by existing political considerations; and further that they offered no panacea for India's numerous woes, but their report proved one thing— that despite revolt, despite critics, despite mistakes in government, she had set her hand to the task and she would muddle through.

The *Los Angeles Times* was prone to think that the Report gave away nothing :

... recommends, not dominion status, but a limited self-government which if successful undoubtedly would grow into dominion status. Nothing resembling the complete independence which the Nationalists and Gandhi have been demanding is suggested in the report; in fact, the plan appears to strengthen British

46. June 24, 1930.

47. June 24, 1930.

rule in some particulars, since the British Provincial governors proposed will have sweeping powers.⁴⁸

The paper was somewhat sceptical when it observed that the belief of the Commission that India was ready for as much home rule as they recommended was somewhat surprising in view of the first section of the Report which showed the appalling nature of the task. The *Baltimore Sun* did not feel enthused over the proposals :

And yet, as one reads the digests and *precis* of the second volume, there is disappointment. The conclusions and proposals arrived at by the Simon Commission seem a good deal less brilliant and satisfactory than was the study of the situation. It does not seem to promise the successful solution which, perhaps too optimistically, had been hoped for as a result of the remarkable thoroughness, candor and ability in the first part.⁴⁹

The paper conceded that one might call the Indian Nationalists fanatical, and say they were devoid of a feeling for reality, for statesmanship and for India's dependence on Britain; nevertheless, it remained that they did express—and not only express but vitalize—the determination of a great body of articulate and intelligent Indians to win at once some form of independence. The *Sun* was of the firm opinion that their dissatisfaction and opposition could not be dismissed lightly.

The *Christian Science Monitor*, with its pro-British sentiments, observed that the Simon Commission's proposals were worth studying, and that the Report carried authority of a kind for which it would be difficult to find a parallel in any other document of its type anywhere.

48. June 25, 1930.

49. June 25, 1930.

... It lays down elastic guiding propositions directed to conceding full self-government within the British Commonwealth of Nations, with such reservations only as it has become convinced are necessary to produce a smooth working in practice at the present time. These reservations are intended to drop off automatically as fast as any of them are made obsolete by the disappearance of racial, religious, tribal and caste differences which they are to meet.⁵⁰

The *Chicago Daily Tribune* summed up the recommendations thus :

The Simon report on India ... has been generally accepted in Great Britain and rejected in India. A few English radicals did not think it was much, but all Indian revolutionaries thought it was nothing. It recommended extensions of suffrage, more preparation for a greater degree of self-government, and slow approaches to a country of federated states, with the withdrawal of Burma from Delhi control.⁵¹

After these brief remarks, the paper touched the core and said that the Indian leaders wanted one thing, the British wanted another, and the two were not reconcilable. A native government with full powers could not exist alongside a British government with superior powers, and the Indians could not be free under British restraint. If they gained their freedom, the British supremacy would end as it did in the white dominions. A free government of one colour could not exist under the overlordship of another. Thus contended the *Tribune* and rightly, and further made the shrewd observation that the side which would prevail would be the side with the superior force. It need not be superior because it was most violent ; passive resistance might wear out armed force, particularly when a so-called liberalism

50. The *Christian Science Monitor*, June 26, 1930.

51. June 28, 1930.

feared to use all the deadly force at its command. The settlement in India, said the paper, would be by the strongest having their way.

The observations of the *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat* were brief and not very illuminating. The Simon Report proposed the establishment of a federal system of government in which each of the states of the Indian Princes and the several provinces of British India would have control of its provincial affairs.

A strong central government would be created with its powers limited to matters pertaining to the welfare of the whole country The franchise would be extended and native participation in legislation and administration gradually increased.⁵²

Most of the criticism of the Simon Report came from the periodicals. *The New Republic*, which made some remarks a week before the Report was out officially, wrote that it would not amount to anything, basing its opinion on the fact that a ruling country in its own interest was not likely to lead the people to any substantial advance towards self-government. On the basis of news dispatches, it commented :

Final comment on the report of the Simon Commission on India must await the publication of the complete document. But the news dispatches covering the substance of the first volume indicate that its first effect is likely to be extremely unfortunate. Here is a nation which is seething with the demand of freedom. Its leaders anxiously await a clear statement of policy by the Government of the nation which at the moment is employing force to retain its rulership. And the recommendations are to come from the Commission consisting wholly of representatives of the ruling

52. The *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat*, June 25, 1930.

country—representatives, moreover, whose responsibility is emphasized by the fact that they comprise members not of one British party alone but of all.⁵³

Time magazine remarked that despite their pretence that the crisis created by "St." Gandhi did not exist, the Simon Commission showed both adaptability and energy of thought.

As in the case of most concessions by masters to subject people, the Simon Report contains qualifications by which the Viceroy and his subordinate Governors could "in case of emergency" resume substantially their present powers and put down such a movement as St. Gandhi's by the sword. On the other hand, the report does not in fact smell of "British hypocrisy" though angry Indians are sure to proclaim a veritable stench.⁵⁴

Time affirmed that the Report was an absolute denial of St. Gandhi's demand for independence and offered no more than a distant hope of Dominion status. Although permeated with goodwill (not mere condescension) it had, in its opinion, an underlying note of pessimism, fruits of its members' struggles to deal with facts and figures almost too gigantic to be grasped.

The impression left with the *Christian Century* was that the Report failed to deal with the vital issue in India. According to its view, the Report proposed, by a new system of federal organization and by the election of provincial legislatures, to give India a further tutelage in the art of self-government. It concluded:

It does not touch the evident evils of the present system of dyarchy. And on the one overwhelming issue it maintains a fatal silence. The report says not a

53. *The New Republic* (June 18, 1930), 110.

54. *Time* (June 1930), 25-26.

word about Dominion status! Not a word! After all the discussion, all the promises, the Commission tells India, "No dominion status in our stock, but here is something just as good."⁵⁵

The Nation with its liberal approach to Indian problems, considered the Report "utterly inadequate" and was of the opinion that the scheme proposed was designed to give Britain a stronger hold on India than ever before. It further remarked that what the Report proposed was a long way from Dominion status, to say nothing of independence, but:

it will not soothe the troubled water of India but will gravely inflame the populace. It will make impossible the proposed October Round Table Conference—we doubt if even the Indian moderates will now be lured to that proposed parley. Indeed, we believe that it puts the final seal upon the long struggle which began with Gandhi's march to make salt, and, for better or worse, will not end until the Indian peoples are in complete control of their own destiny.⁵⁶

The Commonweal, on the other hand, sounded a different note. Believing that India could not govern herself for some time to come, it lauded British statesmanship as proven by the Simon Report, and remarked with some enthusiasm:

Once more British statesmanship has shown itself capable of a masterly document, written with all the objective sense of values and justice of Aristotelian politics, yet produced in times of grave crisis and trouble. . . . Sir John's report is not the least sensational. It says what everyone has long known, that India cannot govern herself completely for many years to come. Yet it recommends another step in the

55. July 1930, 835.

56. July 1930, 1.

direction of self-government, a limited Dominion status.⁵⁷

A few weeks later, commenting upon the views expressed by Nicholas Murray Butler, President of Columbia University, this magazine wrote, in a modified tone:

Those who have tried to study the Simon Report with some impartiality may not agree with President Nicholas Murray Butler that it is "broad-minded, constructive and liberal," but will surely admit that the Commissioners have based an impressive argument upon vast quantities of unimpeachable evidence.⁵⁸

The *Literary Digest* did not venture to give much expression to its view, but, on the other hand, preferred to give a brief resume of the press in India and London :

Not independence, nor yet Dominion status. But an "elastic" All-India Federation, to foster "progressive realization of responsible government," under British grip.

This quintessence of recommendations by the Simon Commission for handling the knotty problem of India is either "atrocious" (*Bombay Chronicle*), and an "evasion of the main problem" (*London Daily Herald*, Labor party), or it "will virtually eliminate the mischievous cry for Dominion status" (*London Daily Mail*), and "marks the most hopeful advance of our generation toward solution of the problem" (*London Times*).⁵⁹

The *New York Times Current History Magazine*, after

57. June 1930, 203.

58. *Ibid*, July 1930, p. 295.

59. July 1930, 10.

quoting at some length the views of important London dailies, noted in passing :

Among the political groups the Liberals were hit hardest by the annihilation of their dream of Dominion status. It is of some significance, also, that no Indian native ruler or Indian Minister ranged himself on the side of the report.⁶⁰

The *World's Work* also made a few observations on the Report, a few months after its publication :

This report is a precise and a comprehensive document proposing a gradual extension of authority to India under careful safeguards. Published a year ago, it might have inflamed public opinion. Now it is handicapped by a high tide of ill feeling.⁶¹

While the American press was thus busy commenting on the Simon Report, the campaign of Civil Disobedience which Mahatma Gandhi had launched at the beginning of 1930 was gaining strength every day. It was obvious to every one that the discussions at the forthcoming Round Table Conference were not likely to have a representative character without the participation of the Indian National Congress. Consequently, during the month of July, 1930, negotiations were started by the two moderate leaders, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. M. R. Jayakar, to improvise a bridge between the Government and the Congress. They had a series of interviews with Gandhi and other leaders. In order to facilitate the negotiations, the Government also brought the leaders together in Yervada jail where Gandhi was interned.

The U.S. press took some note of the negotiations. *The*

60. August 1930, 871.

61. September 1930, 18.

New Republic, for instance, saw in this endeavour an anxiety on the part of the Government to conciliate Gandhi.

It will be remembered that passive resistance started only when the nationalists asked in vain for assurance that the conference would discuss not whether dominion government should be granted, but how. They wanted, not the temporising of a vague hope but a definite promise. They still want it. The Government is now attempting to satisfy them, so that Gandhi will call off his followers and substitute cooperation for non-cooperation.⁶²

After protracted negotiations, the conciliation talks failed. The intermediaries had their last interview with Gandhi on the 5th of September.

The majority of the papers in the United States blamed Gandhi for the breakdown of negotiations. The consensus of opinion was that the failure of the talks, which would mean non-participation of Gandhi in the forthcoming Round Table Conference at London, would have a drastic effect on the Conference. The *New York Herald Tribune* believed that a compromise would have enabled Gandhi to play a decisive role at London, and thus, to some extent, would have delivered the situation into the Nationalists' hands. In its opinion, refusal to compromise, which meant continuance of civil disobedience and the absence of any nationalist representation at the Round Table Conference, would add to difficulty and perhaps to the futility of the conference. Differing from the trend of the majority of opinion, it observed :

The efforts of the moderate conciliators are said to have come to grief against the intransigence of the Nehrus rather than against the attitude of Gandhi, but then the Nehrus are frequently credited with being the

62. *The New Republic*, September 3, 1930, 58.

"brains" of the Nationalist movement. Whoever made the decision, it was no doubt arrived at upon a careful consideration.⁶³

While it was hoped, observed the *Christian Science Monitor*, that the conversations which Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and M. R. Jayakar had been holding with Mahatma Gandhi and Jawharlal Nehru would result in bringing a more conciliatory frame of mind into the Nationalist camp, the reported breakdown of the negotiations and the Mahatma's definite rejection of conciliatory proposals might possibly deepen this tension widely felt in India. But in spite of the breakdown of the parleys, the paper was quite optimistic :

Happily the term "breakdown" although a convenient phrase generally means only that negotiations are temporarily suspended ; so it is possible that there may yet be a satisfactory outcome to the unofficial mission which the Moderates have conducted.⁶⁴

The *Philadelphia Inquirer* while noting that Gandhi's refusal to come to any terms with the British Government apparently put an end to the conciliation policy upon which Mr. MacDonald and his colleagues were banking heavily, said :

The Moderates among the Indians who have been conferring with the Mahatma have apparently broken off negotiations, recognizing their futility. Gandhi still sticks to his demand for universal amnesty and immediate independence, which he knows perfectly well cannot be granted.⁶⁵

63. September 6, 1930.

64. September 6, 1930.

65. September 7, 1930.

The *New York Times* blamed Gandhi for the breakdown of negotiations:

Peace negotiations between the British Government and the Indian Nationalist leaders have collapsed before the impossibilist position of Gandhi and his associates.⁶⁶

The Nation, on the other hand, thought differently. Believing that the complete failure of negotiations between the Indian Government and Mahatma Gandhi meant the definite wrecking of the Round Table Conference, it remarked:

The India Office has announced that the conference will be held as planned; yet it is plain that no real settlement can be reached without the agreement of Mr. Gandhi whose terms, steadily adhered to by him for months, the government has flatly refused.⁶⁷

By the time negotiations between Gandhi and the Government broke off, the Government had promulgated about a dozen ordinances, and in spite of a lack of any prospect of Gandhi's cooperation, the Round Table Conference was scheduled to meet in the beginning of November. At this time comments about the forthcoming Conference began to appear in the American press. Although the question of the participation of the Nationalists in the deliberations of the Conference attracted the attention of quite a few, interest was more marked during the course of the negotiations and especially after their breakdown. The question before the American public, as put by the *St. Louis Daily Globe Democrat*, was:

If the two-thirds of India refuses cooperation, continues its program of non-cooperation and civil disobedience, what then?⁶⁸

66. September 8, 1930.

67. September 17, 1930, 285.

68. September 7, 1930.

Speculation was rife as to whether the Conference would succeed without Gandhi's participation. The anxiety of the Government to conciliate him brought home to the Americans the unique position of the Mahatma. Many periodicals and newspapers believed that the Conference without Gandhi would be a failure. This view was more definitely subscribed to by *The New Republic* and *The Nation*. Blaming the Government for the breakdown of negotiations, *The New Republic* declared: "The October Round Table Conference now seems doomed to failure."⁶⁹ As a matter of fact, this journal had remarked even during the course of the negotiations:

... Nevertheless, the fact remains that Gandhi's opposition to the Round Table Conference, if it is not removed, will cause the Conference to fail.⁷⁰

The Nation shared the views of *The New Republic*, and observed:

The complete failure of the negotiations between the Indian Government and Mahatma Gandhi means the definite wrecking of the Round Table Conference for the next month in London.⁷¹

The *St. Louis Daily Globe Democrat* said:

Any new scheme of Government that may be devised by the so-called Round Table Conference must depend for success on native Cooperation.⁷²

—which implied Congress cooperation. The same opinion was expressed by the *Philadelphia Inquirer* which said, "The effect upon the forthcoming Round Table Conference will hardly be

69. September 17, 1930, 109.

70. September 3, 1930, 58.

71. September 17, 1930, 285.

72. September 7, 1930.

reassuring.⁷³ About ten days later, it reiterated the same view and ended with a sharp note not unfamiliar to Indian ears :

Of course some solution of the Indian problem cannot be indefinitely postponed. But there is force in the contention that the restoration of law and order should precede discussions as to the future. The Prime Minister and the Viceroy have alike yielded too much to threats. That is not the way to deal with Orientals, as anyone familiar with their mental processes must know.⁷⁴

The views of *The World's Work* also were in line with the majority opinion that a round table conference without Gandhi would be futile:

If Gandhi were won to the side of reconciliation, . . . the conference would plainly hold the possibility of a settlement. If the conference is boycotted by Indian leaders, or if the Indians who attend it cannot speak with authority for the Indians who are making trouble, the conference is likely to be barren of results.⁷⁵

Though the majority opinion did not visualize the success of the conference without the participation of the Nationalist leaders and was definite in its views, there were some papers which believed that the conference might arrive at some solution which might be acceptable to the Indian people at large and thus cut the ground from under the feet of the extremist element. Of those holding such views, the New York *Herald Tribune*, though believing that the Nationalist agitation was the driving force behind the Indian problem and that a round table conference which did not include the Nationalists would scarcely

73. September 7, 1930.

74. September 16, 1930.

75. September 1930, 18.

arrive at any permanent solution, suggested a means to by-pass the Congress :

There is the possibility that the English, with the aid of the Princes and of the British Indian Moderates, may work out something which will give them enough popular support within India to undercut the extremists.⁷⁶

The *New York Times* following the same line of thought believed that an effort would be made by the Government to rally moderate Indian support, and suggested :

To a certain extent, this aim may be promoted by the intransigent action of Gandhi and his lieutenants. Without the presence of the latter the conference can hardly live up to the character of a constituent assembly for India. It can nevertheless make its contribution to a settlement by formulating an alternative to the Nationalist programme and submitting it for the judgment of public opinion in Great Britain and India.⁷⁷

Substantially modifying its views a week later, it stated categorically :

To go further is impossible. The fate of India cannot be decided in a consultation from which the many millions who do stand with Gandhi have abstained. But there is no reason for supposing that the conference will take it upon itself to decide for India without the absentees.⁷⁸

It is clear from these observations that almost the entire

76. September 6, 1930.

77. September 8, 1930.

78. *Ibid*, September 13.

press believed that the conference had only remote chances of success without Gandhi's cooperation, the solitary exception being the *Monitor*, which always supported the British point of view. In this paper's opinion, the non-participation of Gandhi was, in a way, an advantage. It said :

So many influential Indians will, after all, attend the coming "round table" conference in London as to raise reasonable hopes that any agreed decisions which this gathering may reach will command sufficient support in India to enable them to be put into operation. It would no doubt have been well if Mahatma Gandhi and other Indian Nationalist leaders had been willing to participate. There are compensating advantages, however, in the very abstention of these extremists, for this has rendered possible a wider range of representation than would otherwise have been the case.⁷⁹

It went on to say that not only would delegates be present who were competent to speak for the semi-independent Indian states and for practically all the Mohammedans, but also a number of Hindus and others who stood in very close relations with the National Congress itself. It concluded :

It is true that those who are to attend have been selected for this purpose by Lord Irwin, the King's representative at Delhi, and not chosen by any special popular vote. But the vastness of the Indian population and its extreme backwardness in political development is thought to have made any other course impracticable.⁸⁰

The long-advertised and long-awaited Round Table Conference was inaugurated by His Majesty King George V on the

79. The *Christian Science Monitor*, September 13, 1930.

80. *Ibid.*

12th of November, 1930, with great oriental and occidental splendour. Much colour was added to the august gathering by the bejewelled Indian Princes with their gorgeous dresses. But the Conference was conspicuous by the absence of a "half-naked fakir"—who claimed to represent the interests of the downtrodden Indian, an unique figure around whose personality the politics of India during the previous decade had been woven. The inauguration of the conference aroused considerable interest in the U.S. press. Broad headlines appeared on the front pages of almost all the important dailies, heralding a new era for India. Considerable interest was shown in the personalities of the delegates from India, and vivid descriptions of the various Princes and the splendour of their jewels made colourful reading.

Apart from the conspicuous display of stories about the opening function of the conference, the important dailies commented editorially also. The views varied. Some saw a hopeful sign for the solution of the complex problem in the gathering of orientals and occidentals. The impression created on some was that the conference would strengthen the hands of the Conservative elements to check the Nationalists whom they considered both hostile and radical. Others thought that it would be a triumph for the right if Britain and India could rise into a nobler atmosphere and demonstrate to the world that it was possible for the people of both countries to thrust aside the diversity of race, colour and creed and find a means whereby East and West could harmoniously cooperate.

Among those who were optimistic about the outcome of the conference was the *Christian Science Monitor*, which believed that the precise form of the constitution which might or might not emerge was not that gave the conference its importance. What made the occasion momentous was the fact that on the outcome of the deliberations might well depend whether East and West, Orient and Occident, were going to solve in friendly understanding and cooperation the gigantic problems which confronted a shrinking world—or whether suspicion, pride, fear and intolerance were going to sweep reason and conscience

aside and drive them toward a conflict with disastrous results for mankind. It emphasized :

There is agreement in fundamentals between Great Britain and the Indian delegates. The goal is complete self-government for India : the dispute solely concerns speed and ways and means. With goodwill, tolerance, a resolute facing of facts and common sense, there should be no unbridgeable breach between the two sides as to what the next step should be.⁸¹

The principal obstacle was that the Indian National Congress, with Mahatma Gandhi at its head, had decided in favour of immediate independence—an alternative quite incompatible with unity, order or peace—and had refused to attend. But it was of the opinion that if the conference framed a scheme for advance which commended itself to world opinion, the Mahatma would not prefer to promote chaos rather than give it a chance.

The *St. Louis Daily Globe Democrat* conformed to the opinions of the *Monitor* and saw in the conference two currents running high—one from the East itself where millions of Mohammedans of India had seen their co-religionists in various countries revising old traditions and institutions and setting up new and better ways for ensuring the advantages for which Governments existed ; the other, in its opinion, was from the West where the Indian people had seen an example in the ever-increasing number of countries which were assuming responsibility for their own welfare under self-rule. But it sounded hollow when it asserted that the Nationalists

... will be represented indirectly. More or less of a reflex of their views is found in the attitude of the hereditary Indian Princes and other delegates of vested

81. November 12, 1930.

privilege, and even in the very summoning of the conference itself.⁸²

The *Kansas City Star* showed intelligent interest for it argued that the success of the deliberations at London was important not merely to Great Britain but to every nation interested in the orderly development of the Orient. Believing India to be a stabilizing influence in the East, the *Star* struck a right note when it remarked that every factor tending to raise the standard of living in India would improve the market for American goods. Referring to the Congress abstention, it said :

The Congress leaders have declined to participate in the conference, but the present rebellion would probably collapse at once in the event of an agreement at London.⁸³

The *New York Times* bade the conference go ahead in its deliberations and pooh-poohed the Congress demand for Dominion status. It wrote editorially :

There will be very little time wasted on the extremist claims of the absent Gandhi and his Nationalist followers, formidable though the movement may be which they represent. The demand for full dominion status, with control over the Indian Army and the "right of secession," is a demand for virtual independence which no one in Great Britain will listen to and which is impossible in the nature of things.⁸⁴

The paper felt that if immediate Dominion status for India in complete equality with the other British dominions was ruled out by the basic facts of the situation, it had been made clear on the

82. November 13, 1930.

83. November 13, 1930.

84. The *New York Times*, November 12, 1930.

other hand that larger concessions would have to be made to India than were contemplated in the Simon Report. The *Times* believed that the fundamental idea was valid: the British Government was bound to retain over India an adequate measure of supervision and guardianship, but since the publication of the Report, the temper of the delegates had shown that a real and generous approach to Dominion Government was inevitable, and that British guidance and control must be reduced to the necessary minimum.

In an editorial entitled "Tackling India", The *Springfield Daily Republican* maintained that the Round Table was mainly for free and full discussion from every point of view, and that emphasis had been put upon the fact that the discussions would not be hampered by a fixed programme. The paper was conscious of the difficulties involved in the deliberations, and remarked that the discussions, at best, would be extremely delicate and difficult, but

... even if agreement is impossible, however, the round table is as good a way of working toward an agreement as could be found, and it is a pity that so sensible a plan was not resorted to earlier.⁸⁵

To the *New York Herald Tribune* the Conference presented to Britain a more serious problem, in many respects, than any with which they had previously been faced.

At the conference a dozen Englishmen, representing all three of the British parties and by no means unanimous in their own views, are confronting seventy-three Indians who are at least equally divided.

From the composition of the conference it is easy to understand why so many are predicting its total failure. Whether the abstention of the Nationalists

85. November 13, 1930.

is a help or hindrance is an arguable point. If they had come they would have wrecked the proceedings ; by staying away they threaten to doom them to futility.⁸⁶

More serious and thoughtful opinions were expressed by some sections of the Press—particularly those with a liberal outlook. They did not indulge in optimistic speculations regarding the Conference, and they showed in their opinions a better appreciation of the complex nature of the problems incidental to that august gathering. Commenting on the Round Table, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* pointed out that although India was an agglomeration of many races and religions which before the British conquest were constantly at war one against another, and although removal of British sovereignty would, according to many students, result in chaos, nevertheless actual self-government was demanded by a great majority of the educated Indians regardless of racial or religious differences, and it was not generally believed that the conference would bring autonomy any nearer realization. Yet the *Plain Dealer* spoke out a plain fact not then discerned by many :

The only question which agitates the British mind is as to whether these great personages really exercise any large influence in Hindustan. It is feared that the anti-British movement may have gone so far under the leadership of humble men that all the potentates acting in unison would be powerless to halt it.⁸⁷

The *Outlook and Independent* noted that when King George opened the conference on November 12th, the leaders of the Indian National Congress were conspicuously absent, and although the British delegates—representing all three British parties—went to the conference insisting that their hands had not been tied by any pre-arranged programme, it nevertheless seemed

86. November 12, 1930.

87. November 16, 1930.

doubtful that they would meet the Indian demand for Dominion status. It added, rather pessimistically :

Even should the Indian and British conferees agree, their plan probably would be unacceptable to Gandhi's Nationalists who have boycotted the conference and demanded a full national government responsible only to the people of India and possessing the right to secede from the Empire.⁸⁸

The *Nation*, always critical of British policy in respect to India, showed a better understanding of the situation :

With the convening of the Round Table Conference in London, the problem of India once more directly confronts the British Government. The action of the Government recently in India, the discussion of India in the British press and the resolutions on this topic at the recent conference of the British Labor Party make it abundantly clear that Great Britain will yield without further struggle what Gandhi and the Congress Party are demanding.⁸⁹

With the exception of The *Nation* and the *Herald Tribune*, no American paper or journal took into consideration the nature of the composition of the Indian delegation. Who represented the masses, few cared to think. It was apparent that the delegation represented the vested interests which had nothing in common with the majority of the people in India. The *Nation* was fully aware of this important aspect and remarked that of the Indians who were attending the conference it would seem that some—the landlords, for example—were merely trying to preserve their own vested interests; others were holding on to the British apron strings out of affection or

88. November 19, 1930, 448.

89. November 19, 1930, 543.

timidity; some thought that they were going to pin the British down to something definite, and yet others that one more appeal to British idealism would solve the problem. Concluding its analysis, it said :

But the Indian delegates are all aware, and so are the British, that the power of the Indian case lies not in declamation or argument, but in the will of Gandhi and the Congress party. . . . Whatever bargaining power the Indian delegates possess depends not on their own strength but on the strength of the little man in Yeravda jail. The possible threat of the Indian delegates which will carry most weight with British will be : "If you do not do as we ask, we shall go back and join Gandhi."⁹⁰

At the plenary session of the Round Table Conference, which ended on the 21st of November, much eloquence was displayed by various delegates. The entire session was devoted to statements of general principles, formulation of Indian rights and claims, definitions of position by spokesmen of the two British minority parties. For the party in power, Mr. MacDonald spoke with special restraint imposed by his office, but in his remarks could be discerned a note of warning to the Indian delegates against harbouring any vain hopes. He stressed India's need of a constitution that would work, that would fit into the scheme of things in India, and, by no means least, that could win the approval of Parliament.

The attitude of the rulers and representatives of the Indian States was the most surprising. As a matter of fact, it was undoubtedly the most important feature of the conference. During the course of his speeches (before the conference was subdivided into Committees) His Highness the Maharaja of Bikaner emphatically stated that he was "convinced that the States would make the best contribution to the greater

90. *Ibid.*

prosperity and contentment of India as a whole in a federal system of Government composed of the States and British India.”⁹¹ Two days later, the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes—the Maharaja of Patiala—confirmed that view, declaring that he believed that the quickest method of achieving India’s enhanced status and dignity was by federation.

These dramatic developments naturally intensified United States interest in the proceedings of the conference, although their ultimate implications were not fully appreciated. Prior to the conference, the U. S. press had laid much stress upon the divisions and complexities operating against self-government for the people of India. The speeches of the Indian delegates were a straight answer to the much-discussed notion that these difficulties were insurmountable. The still more insistent argument that the ancient feud between Muslims and Hindus (which Britain had convinced her American friends was the great stumbling block in her earnest desire to grant self-government) was irreconcilable, seemed to lose all its force in the face of the Muslim demand in the conference for Dominion status. Nor did the delegates of the “Untouchables,” for whom the British had claimed to have a soft corner in their hearts and who could under no circumstances be left to the mercy of the upper-caste Hindus, especially the Brahmins (who, the British propagandists had repeatedly warned, would rule them with typical oriental autocracy), come to the help of the old critics of India. The spokesmen for the sixty million Untouchables declared that they would rather take their chance with a government of their compatriots than continue under the British *Raj*. The attitude of the Indian Princes also surprised many. A wave of nationalist urge seemed to sweep the Indian delegates. The British, it appeared, found themselves facing a united Indian front—all this despite the non-presence of the National Congress.

It would be wrong, however, to think that the American press was entirely taken in by the ostentatious show of the

91. *India in 1930-31, op. cit.*, p. 95.

Princes and the delegates representing communal and other interests. In spite of the misgivings created by the first exuberant display of lofty idealism in the traditional approach of the American critics to the Indian problem, sceptical opinion was distinctly discernable in the various comments made. Some papers believed that just as Indian disunity was exaggerated once upon a time, so there was some likelihood that a greater degree of Indian unity might be read into the London speeches than they really connoted. Others thought that the enthusiasm for an autonomous India had, in the minds of her delegates, clouded those traditional hostilities and cultural differences which no spirited burst of idealism could remove from India's diverse millions. In this connection, the *New York Times* remarked that although the divisions, complexities and mutual hostilities in India had been exaggerated, they nevertheless existed. The paper felt that the forces of separatism were not strong enough to cope with the growing sense of nationalism, but they were serious enough to suggest that India was not yet ready to operate complete system of home rule. In other words, the peoples, religions, classes and castes of India had organized a united front in London against the British overlord, but there was not sufficient unity among the people of India for full immediate nationhood. "The capacity for complete self-government in India still lags behind the desire for it."⁹²

The *Richmond Times Dispatch* wrote more or less in the same strain :

The Round Table Conference concluded its last week's deliberations with the general appearance of forthcoming dominion status for India. . . . To judge by speeches of the Indian delegates, none of the ancient difficulties to home rule in India exist.⁹³

But the paper still maintained that it was hard to believe that the Brahmins would wipe out the age-old adherence to

92. November 22, 1930.

93. November 2, 1930.

caste system, or the Muslims would temper their religious faith to accord with the Hindu ways, and it found it difficult to visualize the spectacle of the Indian Princes maintaining their existing position without British support.

The *Kansas City Star* pointed out that it had been argued in the past that British India and the native states had different aspirations and that this fact constituted a grave obstacle to an Indian Dominion. But that contention now fell to the ground in the face of the statement of the Maharaja of Bikaner, speaking for the Indian Princes.

The first week of the conference has shown an India united in its desire for home rule in a way that will be difficult for the British to ignore.⁹⁴

The *Philadelphia Inquirer* felt that what had hapened at the conference was unexpected but not wholly surprising. Some inexplicable urge must have influenced the Hindus and the Muslims, the Brahmins and the Untouchables, the Indian Princes and the inhabitants of the British territories, into a superficial accord. The paper rightly concluded that "the real test will come when the new constitution is evolved."⁹⁵

The *Herald Tribune* appraised the situation correctly when it remarked that the longer the conference sat in London and the deeper it went into detailed discussions of the Indian federal government of the future, the clearer it would become that Great Britain had nothing to fear in calling the conference and nothing to lose, whatever the issue.

The participation of the rulers of the native states, not to mention the Muslims and Sikhs, in a demand for an autonomous all-Indian federation was, at the outset, the best possible guarantee that the gathering would either evolve a constitutional program which

94. November 24, 1930.

95. November 24, 1930.

would more rigidly limit the scope of radical Hindu nationalism than the most expensive British policy system or would break up and prove to the world that the Indians could not find among themselves a formula for self-government.⁹⁶

When the heat of the patriotic fervour displayed by the delegates cooled down in the chilly London atmosphere, the conference settled down, after the Christmas recess, to more mundane work. The question of federation having been acceded to in principle by Britain's spokesmen, the conference divided itself into a number of sub-committees of which the most important was the Federal Structure sub-committee presided over by Lord Sankey. It was comprised of six British members, five representatives from the States and ten from British India, and it framed the broad outline of the Indian Federation of which the States were to be an integral part. According to its proposals instead of the supremacy of federal over provincial legislature, there was to be a strict delimitation of legislative powers. The portfolios of external relations, ecclesiastical establishment and Princely States were to remain reserved in the hands of the Governor-General. Funds for the administration of the reserved subjects were guaranteed to the Governor-General by making them non-votable and the first charge on the revenue of India. All other subjects were to be placed in charge of Ministers who were to follow parliamentary procedure. Full autonomy was conceded to the Provinces. But in spite of these seemingly great strides toward the goal of self-government, the Governors and the Governor-General were vested with legislative, financial and administrative powers designed to enable them to discharge their special responsibilities for the maintenance of the peace and tranquillity for the safeguarding of the financial stability of the country, the protection of the rights of the Princely States and minorities

96. December 10, 1930.

and the prevention of commercial discrimination against British goods and Companies in India.

The Conference came to an end on the 19th of January, 1931, with the closing speech of the Prime Minister, formally enunciating the policy of His Majesty's Government with regard to the Indian constitutional problem. The termination of the conference brought forth comments from almost every important paper in the United States. Most of the Press considered the conference a great success and paid tribute to the statesmanship of both the British and the Indian delegates. The work of the Federal Structure Sub-committee was much applauded by the majority of the papers. A number of papers believed that the scheme of all-India federation went much further towards the goal of self-government than had been expected. Their liberal appraisal of the Conference led some of the papers to believe that the achievements of the London parley had exceeded even the expectations of the Indian Nationalist leaders due to the incorporation of the princely States in the federal scheme. In spite of the commendable views expressed by a great majority of the papers, opinion was not lacking which believed that the ultimate success of the new scheme depended upon the attitude of the Indian Nationalist leaders.

The *Herald Tribune* viewed the outline constitution for India agreed upon by Lord Sankey's committee as a singular triumph of statesmanship. It believed that the ingenuity of compromise out of which it had been built was evident upon the surface; what did not appear was the suppleness of mind and the dexterity of negotiation which could produce so large a measure of agreement from a gathering that seemed doomed to total failure. Both the British and the Indian delegations had grappled with a complex of warring interests and reconciled them to a workable degree. The paper conceded :

The draft constitution goes very much farther toward a self-governing India than anything which the British have previously dared to offer. . . . The princes, one

cannot help feeling, are the key to the solution ; they have made it possible to transfer authority to "India" without necessarily transferring it only to hostile and radical Indians.⁹⁷

Although the paper believed that the draft constitution went a great deal farther toward a self-governing India, its ultimate success rested with Gandhi who could destroy the results of the London deliberations if he chose. Besides—like the Reforms of 1919—the new constitution could be wrecked from within. The draft constitution was definitely transitional in character and to succeed in practice would require an earnest desire among both British and Indians to see the transition period proceed in orderly fashion.

In the eyes of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, the important achievement of the Round Table was the Hindu-Muslim agreement on the basis of which, in the paper's opinion, the British Government had been enabled to outline the framework of India's future federal Government. It added :

To date the pessimists have been confounded. It remains to be seen whether the reception of the Government report will justify continued optimism.⁹⁸

The *Los Angeles Times* was very optimistic about the achievements of the London Conference, and believed that it augured well for the peace of India that the Conference adopted the report of Lord Sankey. In its opinion :

... about the only question remaining to be settled before the formation of the new nation is the matter of finances. The credit of India must be preserved, and England is expected to guarantee it. To what extent, however, is a matter for future arrangement.⁹⁹

97. January 14, 1931.

98. January 18, 1931.

99. January 19, 1931.

The *New York Times*, considering the new constitution for India as outlined at the London Conference a long step toward Dominion government, commented :

In one respect, the new Constitution probably goes beyond the expectations of the Indian Nationalists themselves. It brings on the stage a united Indian nation. . . . Should the followers of Gandhi accept the new Constitution, they will be greatly strengthened in working for complete self-government by the fact that they will be speaking for a united India.¹⁰⁰

Unlike the *New York Herald Tribune* which believed that the ultimate success of the new Constitution depended upon the attitude of Gandhi and the Congress, the *Times* was of the opinion that Gandhi's boycott of the Constitution would not be fatal. Developing its argument, it wrote :

Strategy from the British side would demand its (the new Constitution's) promulgation in any case, so as to put the Nationalists at [the disadvantage of combatting a national Indian Government].¹⁰¹

To the *Kansas City Star*, despite the failure to reach an agreement upon the protection of political minorities in the proposed federation, the Conference ended with a fine record of achievement. The success of the Conference was more remarkable, it said, in view of the fact that Gandhi had refused to participate in its deliberations and with even the Moderate group denouncing the Simon Report. The Conference

. . . has succeeded in outlining a form of government for India that gives every indication of offering a swift

100. January 20, 1931.

101. *Ibid.*

transition to home rule under conditions acceptable to the great body of Indian opinion.¹⁰²

The *Christian Science Monitor*, which had always subscribed to Britain's point of view in her relations with India and which had always considered the Indian Nationalist leaders merely a small group of extremist agitators disrupting the peace and tranquillity of the country under the benign rule of the British, came out with some sobering remarks. Commenting on the achievements of the Conference, it wrote: "Its prospects of realization are bright. . . . It provides for complete self-government in all existing provinces."¹⁰³ Changing its usual tone, it added that many points had been left indeterminate, particularly the communal question. The major nationalist party in India, which had stood aloof from the Conference, had to be won over. That party (referring to the Indian National Congress) whatever might have been the excesses for which it was responsible, stood nevertheless for the happiness and welfare of India's many peoples and races, and it ought to be brought into the scheme and that "right soon." Summing up, it said :

Powers have been reserved to British officers to enable them to intervene if things go wrong, but such intervention is intended to be of a continually diminishing nature. Whether the Constitution succeeds, therefore, or fails, will depend upon Indians and upon them alone.¹⁰⁴

The *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat*, after admonishing the "Indian irreconcilables" for calling the proposals, as visualized under the Round Table plan, only a "camouflaged self-government," wrote :

102. January 20, 1931.

103. January 21, 1931.

104. *Ibid.*

In estimating how much of real self-government is preferred, it must be remembered that the states of India now have no small measure of home rule, of control of their own local affairs, and this will be retained. The all-India super-government, of course, will be adapted from the American federal principle, but with modifications already in force in several countries.¹⁰⁵

The *Richmond Times Dispatch* was pleased to note that the political wisdom of the British had again shown itself capable of seeing things through to a conclusion satisfactory to a relatively subject people, and that "the groundwork of dominion status under a federal union has been established."¹⁰⁶

The *Springfield Daily Republican*, congratulating the London Government, said:

The round-table discussion of a new status for India, which opened in London last November, closed Monday with a larger achievement to its credit than most people had anticipated. . . . One of the most hopeful features of the discussions was the general disposition of the British delegates to consider the problem of India in a broad-minded way with little regard for party lines.¹⁰⁷

Whether or not home rule for India was established on the liberal lines then marked out, it said, the project and the conduct of the Round Table at which it was broached might perhaps be regarded as the greatest achievement of MacDonald Government thus far. "The round table reflects credit on all who took part in it."¹⁰⁸

105. January 21, 1931.

106. January 21, 1931.

107. January 21, 1931.

108. *Ibid.*

The *Philadelphia Inquirer* was critical of the federal plan as it felt that Mr. MacDonald's optimistic summary of the results could not disguise the fact that, despite the goodwill manifested on all hands, the essential problem remained unsolved. The plan for a federated India, as first outlined in the Simon Report, was doubtless the just and logical settlement of many difficulties, but the picture of the new constitution presaging full native responsibility was somewhat overdrawn. The ultimate results of the Round Table deliberations depended upon two factors, the attitude of the British Parliament and that of the Indian people themselves, and, since the representatives of all three parties in the conference came to substantial agreement, the approval of the legislative body might be anticipated. But the paper could not say in what spirit Gandhi and the Congress Party would accept the olive branch held out to them. Summing up, it said:

Clearly dominion status is still unachieved and independence is a long way off. In the new constitution there are careful provisions for the maintenance of some measure of British authority. Many believe that with all the checks and balances it will not be easily workable.¹⁰⁹

A few days later the paper again wrote in a critical strain about the proposed federal plan, maintaining that parliamentary government was not a blessing that could be bestowed upon a nation offhand and that, as a rule, Orientals had little conception of any other form of rule than despotism. It went on to say with some disregard to actualities:

Even with such restrictions as the new plan imposes there is a real danger that the conduct of political affairs will fall into the hands of the Congress party, which so far has shown little conception of the real

109. January 22, 1931.

meaning of democracy or little desire to practise it. For the welfare of the mass of the toilers in India, for which British rule has done so much, they apparently have slight regard. . . . The success of the plan depends more on what India may do than on what Great Britain may do. It would be perilous to give up control over foreign affairs, defence and finance to a party which has persistently sought to gain its ends by violence.¹¹⁰

Unlike other daily papers which commented on the London Conference, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* did not indulge in lavish praise of British statesmanship nor laud the patriotic sentiments of the Princes or the integrity of other Indian delegates. On the other hand, in its opinion, whatever success the conference had achieved was due to the Indian nationalists sitting behind bars in India. Their refusal of obedience and cooperation, their passive resistance, evasion of taxes and boycott of British goods, had put pressure on the British Government, and without them there would not have resulted the progressive proposals which emerged from the conference. In an editorial "Liberties in India," the *Tribune* concluded:

The Indian Round Table Conference in London has come to an end . . . with a hopeful plan for a new government to be further considered by the British and later offered. It will attempt the raising of India to a dominion status, with reservations, retaining for Great Britain the control of defense and of foreign affairs and a supervision of finance. Otherwise the Indian states and federation are to have what is described as "responsible government."¹¹¹

The *Christian Century*, one of the few periodicals which showed genuine interest in the Round Table Conference and its

110. *Ibid.*, January 25, 1931.

111. January 23, 1931.

deliberations, thought about the London parley in the same terms as did the majority of the daily papers. It considered the federal plan an enormous advance towards Indian self-government. In its opinion, compared with the provisions of the Reform Act of 1919, the proposed federal scheme marked a virtual political revolution.

For in the new constitution there is, if not an immediate "substance of independence," something so close to that and pointing so straight in that direction that the powerful nationalists may well see the quickest road to their goal inside the new form of government. At any rate, the centre of interest now shifts back to India. For the moment, everything hangs on the decision of Gandhi and his associates.¹¹²

But *The Nation* was sceptical:

Concessions like these might have gone a long way to satisfy Indian opinion a year ago, but it is doubtful whether any such plan will be accepted today either by the Congress Party or their sympathisers in view of the events of the last twelve months.¹¹³

Of all the comments in the American press, those of *The New Republic* gave one of the fairest appraisals:

The Round Table Conference on India has closed, and neither a constitution nor a definite pledge of dominion status has come out of it. What was accomplished was a survey of difficulties, an honest attempt to bring the minds of the conferees together, and a tentative agreement on certain important objectives like a federal constitution, with some form of protection for

112. January 28, 1931.

113. January 21, 1931, 59.

minorities, and autonomy modified in the transitional stages by reservations in the British interest.¹¹⁴

It did not believe, as Mr. MacDonald had hoped in his valedictory speech at the conclusion of the Conference, that the Indian delegates would be able to rally Indian public opinion around the proposals. The paper drew attention to the fact that while the delegates had been away in London, Indian opinion had been embittered by the civil disobedience campaign and the repressive measures used against it. If the delegates had been able to return with a definite and completed programme ready to be put into effect, they might conceivably have had a chance of winning support. As was foreseen, the Round Table Conference was one of those measures which, though it might have been effective if undertaken earlier, came too late to accomplish its purpose.

It is apparent from the above that the American press as a whole, barring a very small section, failed to appraise correctly the Round Table Conference. Interest in its proceedings was not shown by the majority of the papers. Only a few comments appeared between the opening and closing sessions, and these made only passing references to the important issues discussed by the various sub-committees. A great deal of interest was shown by practically all the important newspapers, however, at the opening of the session, speculating on the expectations of the parley in which delegates from the East and West were meeting, and also, as has been mentioned above, at the closing session when undue praise was lavished on the delegates for their unique achievement. The only dailies which made some comment on the proceedings were the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *New York Times* and the *New York Herald Tribune*. Their comments showed an utter lack of understanding of the Indian situation generally and of the implications of the constitutional problems under discussion in particular. Reviewing the situation

114. January 28, 1931, 282.

when the Federal Structure Sub-committee was still in session, the *Monitor* believed that in the proposed reforms the position of the Viceory with respect to the proposed new constitution would be analogous to that of the Resident at the Courts of the Indian Princes. The functions of the Residents, as understood by this paper, were :

These Residents as a rule take no part in the affairs of the States to which they are accredited. Their relations with the princes are intimate and cordial. Their advice is sought and valued. They are always on the spot, however, and have wide powers in reserve to intervene in case of need. It is not unreasonable to expect that a system which has worked well on a small scale in the Indian States may prove successful in the larger field in which it is now proposed to try it.¹¹⁵

Anyone familiar with the administration of the Indian States would not subscribe to this view regarding the role of the Residents at the Princely Courts. These officials, acting as the agents of the British Government, kept a close watch on the administration of the States to which they were ascredited. Nothing of significance took place in them without their approval and advice. Their advice was virtually a command, and the area of that advice was not limited. As K.M. Panikkar has put it :

... the whisper of the Residency is the thunder of the State, and, ... there is no matter on which the Resident does not feel qualified to give advice.¹¹⁶

That the American press failed to appraise correctly the Conference is borne out by the undue importance attached, as

115. January 8, 1931.

116. *An Introduction to the Study of Relations of Indian States with the Government of India*, (London : M. Hopkinson & Co. Ltd.. 1927), p. 111.

has already been noted above, to the declaration of the Princes to join the British Indian provinces in a federal scheme, and the solidarity shown by practically all the other Indian delegates in their demand for self-government. None of the press, including the Liberal section which had in the past shown a better understanding of the Indian problem, paused to think of the reason for the sudden change of attitude of the autocratic Princes to join hands with the so-called democratic element in the demand for transfer of power from the British to the Indians. If the Indian Princes were known for anything, it was for their loyalty to the British Crown on whose sufferance they existed, and a discerning eye could have discovered the real motives behind the much-lauded declaration of the Indian potentates.

The incorporation of the States into the proposed federation was advantageous to both the Princes and the British Government. The States were prepared for the federation provided it was independent of British control, though for a transitional period that independence might be modified by certain limitations. The Princes felt that as a constituent part of the federation it would be possible for them to secure a stronger position and at the same time be able in non-federal matters to secure freedom from intervention by the Central Government except on definite and agreed grounds. In a word, the Princes wanted to set a limit to the existing "Doctrine of Paramountcy"¹¹⁷ which the Government of India had more than once declared depended on the will of the Crown. The British Government, which was, on the other hand, clearly impelled towards responsible government in the Provinces, wanted an autocratic element in the Central Government to check the inevitable assault on the centre by the Provinces relying on their position as exponents of the will of the people. Therefore, to check the urge for more power, manifested by a joint demand of all the Indian delegates, and also to set a limit to the possibility of the

117. The overlordship of the British Government which changed the position of the Indian States from independent allies to protected feudatories of British Crown.

Indian nationalists utilizing the new reforms for wresting authority from the British, it was essential to build up a conservative central authority, and the States could serve that purpose. For these services to the Empire, the British Government was prepared to pay a price. A. B. Keith, a keen student of Indian affairs, observed :

Hence, throughout the long period of negotiation, the States stood out clearly as seeking to attain maximum advantage for themselves and above all security from intervention in their domestic affairs by the federation and the crown. No doubt many princes were also moved by the ideal of a United India soon free from British dominion and there is no ground to suppose that any of them were prepared for such an end to sacrifice anything of their internal autocracy.¹¹⁸

The community of interest shown by the autocratic Princes and the other Indian delegates representing various communities and interests and who apparently did not appear to have anything in common with the Princes, greatly misled American opinion in its evaluation of the London Conference. The entire Press failed to see that the Indian politicians who welcomed, at first with enthusiasm, the idea of making a common stand with the Princes against British control, were, most of them, decidedly oligarchic or aristocratic and conservative in their views and they saw no objection to having in the participation of the Princely States in the federal plan a strength of conservatism to prevent any risk of democratic efflorescence.

118. *A Constitutional History of India, 1620-1935* (London : Methuen & Company Limited, 1936), pp. 296-297.

The Civil Disobedience Movement

The successful boycott of the Simon Commission had infused the Indians with a new spirit. Prior to this, for about five years the political tide in India had been running at a low ebb. Now, after this quiescent and passive period, the country seemed fresh and active and a new impulse seemed to move the people. Their suppressed energy burst forth, manifesting itself in boycott demonstrations. The people were eager for political action. The Council work of the Swarajists occupied only a few of the elite. The energies of the rank and file of the Congress, Gandhi had canalized into non-political avenues like Untouchability, Khaddar and Prohibition. These measures, though of importance in their own place, were not likely to satisfy the peoples' thirst for independence and particularly that of the younger blood. Yet such activities were disciplinary and preparatory for political action.

After the Simon Commission left India in April 1929, there was again a lull in the political atmosphere.

On October 31, 1929, Lord Irwin, Governor-General of India, made an announcement reiterating the declaration of Mr. Montagu made in the House of Commons in August 1917 of "providing for the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of

responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire.”¹ Irwin had returned from England after consultation with the British Government. Among other things, the Governor-General said :

... it is His Majesty's will and pleasure that the plan laid by Parliament in 1919 should be the means by which British India may attain its due place among his Dominions. . . . that it is the desire of the British Government that India should, in the fullness of time, take her place in the Empire in equal partnership with the Dominions. . . . I am authorised on behalf of His Majesty's Government to state clearly that in their judgment it is implicit in the declaration of 1917 that the natural goal of India's constitutional progress, as there contemplated, is the attainment of Dominion status.²

The Governor-General also announced the forthcoming Round Table Conference of the representatives of different parties and interests in British India and the representatives of the Indian States to meet His Majesty's Government for the purpose of conference and discussion in regard to both the British Indian and All-Indian problems.

Almost immediately after the announcement, the leaders of the different parties and opinions met at Delhi to consider the Viceroy's declaration. Gandhi also participated in the deliberations of the Leaders' Conference, and a joint resolution or manifesto was agreed upon, accepting the Viceroy's declaration

1. Quoted in chap. I, p. 24.

2. *India in 1929-30*, Statement in Parliament in accordance with the requirements of the Government of India Act, 1919 (Calcutta : Government of India Central Publication Branch, 1931), Appendix II, p. 467.

subject to certain conditions³ which, it was stated, were vital and must be fulfilled. If those conditions were not accepted by the Government, then cooperation was not to be offered.

The announcement of the Governor-General was very ingeniously worded. Some doubt had been expressed about the interpretation of that part of the statement which the Viceroy had made on behalf of His Majesty's Government regarding Dominion Status. The declaration could mean much or very little. On the 23rd of December, 1929, Gandhi met the Viceroy and demanded assurance that the Round Table Conference would proceed on the basis of full Dominion Status. The Viceroy only referred to his statement and could not extend an invitation to the Round Table Conference with any definite promise of Dominion Status. Thus the declaration bore no fruit ; but the Liberals promised their cooperation all the same.

Soon after Gandhi's conference with the Viceroy, the annual session of Congress met at Lahore. It was a momentous session for two reasons : firstly, it was presided over by a younger person—Jawaharlal Nehru ; secondly, the aim of the Congress was changed from "Swaraj", an anomalous term, to "complete independence for India."

Great Britain in 1930 was in a critically difficult position owing to the grave unemployment problem. She was in no condition to challenge India, her best customer, to economic warfare. Young India, especially, had begun to feel a new strength of her own. She was no longer in a pliant mood. These facts probably accounted for the chequered reception which the Viceroy's declaration received in England. The

3. The conditions were :

- (a) All discussions at the proposed Conference to be on the basis of full Dominion Status for India.
- (b) There should be a predominant representation of Congressmen at the Conference.
- (c) A general amnesty of political prisoners.
- (d) The Government of India to be carried on from then onward, as far as possible under existing conditions on the lines of a Dominion Government.

younger members of the Congress party who advocated complete separation from England, were critical of everything that came from England. The year was momentous in the history of Indian politics. The Congress had changed its creed from "Swaraj" to "Complete independence," as has been mentioned above. The people were full of enthusiasm.

To start the campaign and to whip up the temper of the people, January 26th was fixed as "Independence Day" when a pledge of independence was to be taken all over the country. The people were once again approaching a showdown with the Government. The political atmosphere was electrified; the masses were more disciplined now, and there was a clear appreciation of the nature of the struggle. The "Working Committee" of the Congress passed a resolution asking the members to resign their seats from the Councils. Orientation of the Congress aim from Swaraj to complete Independence required a change in the nature of the fight. The Council work did not seem to lead the country to the desired goal. Of course, the Sawarajists did hamper the work of the Government and gave them a few headaches, but the Governor-General could very well and did run the administration by ordinances. The fight within the Councils did not bring any tangible results, but it did keep up the fighting spirit of the nation at large; besides it had some propaganda value both in India and abroad. Even the illiterate masses in India could appreciate the defeats of the Government in the Councils though they could not follow the finer points on particular issues.

Into this electrified atmosphere, Gandhi launched his movement of "Civil Disobedience." After appraising the authorities of his plan of action, he made an announcement asking the Government for the fulfilment of his demands, on compliance with which, he said, the Congress would heartily participate in any conference. In a letter written on March 2nd, 1930, extracts from which were published in the *New York Times*,⁴ after describing the extent of the damage done to India by the

4. March 7, 1930.

British rule, Gandhi requested the Viceroy to comply with his demands, and made it clear that if the Viceroy could not see his way clear to deal with those demands, he would start Civil Disobedience Movement. The Viceroy's reply, which was described as an "ultimatum," was quick and unequivocal. Gandhi's rejoinder was strong and unequivocal. He said :

On bended knees I asked for bread and received a stone instead. The English nation responds only to force and I am not surprised at the Viceregal reply. The only public peace the nation knows is the peace of public prison. India is a vast prison house. I repudiate this (British) Law and regard it as my sacred duty to break the mournful monotony of compulsory peace that is choking the heart of the nation for want of free vent.⁵

In America, not much notice was taken of Lord Irwin's statement, and less of Gandhi's reply. Of the very few comments, those of the *Outlook and Independent* were critical of the declaration :

Early last November Lord Irwin announced that Britain intended to confer Dominion status on India, adding that Indian leaders would be invited to a conference in London. The promise was far from revolutionary. Britain has often made it. This time it salted rather than salved the inflamed feelings of the Indian nationalists.⁶

The *Christian Science Monitor*, a firm believer in *Pax Britannica*, was very critical of the attitude taken by the nationalist leaders to the Viceroy's declaration :

5. Dr. Pattabhi Sitarammayya, *The History of the Indian National Congress*, p. 377.

6. January 8, 1930.

Recently Lord Irwin, taking alarm at threats of hostile action, used by extremists, made an attempt to counter their efforts by a declaration of India's ultimate attainment of Dominion status. This he did with the very best intentions, though against the advice of the Simon Commission, leading Liberals, many Conservatives and an experienced official class, for he had hopes, not only of rallying the Moderates but also of winning back the Extremists. He even went so far as to confer with Gandhi and Pandit Motilal Nehru, another extreme Nationalist leader. These negotiations failed and at Lahore much wild talk was indulged in and independence was demanded—regardless of the fact that today the withdrawal of British rule would mean chaos in India.⁷

The Gandhi-Irwin negotiations and their failure evoked some interest in certain quarters. The Mahatma's threat to launch his movement again after a respite of about a decade did not seem exciting news for his first movement was considered by most of the press as a failure. His present declaration, therefore, was not looked upon with any seriousness. The *New York Times* commented :

This is not the first time that a campaign of civil disobedience has been led by Mahatma Gandhi against the British Government in India. Eight years ago, events moved along a course very much like the present one. So close, indeed, is the parallel that the arrest of Gandhi, now thought to be imminent, may fall on the anniversary of Gandhi's incarceration, March 10, 1922. . . . On more than one occasion he subjected himself to penance for bloodshed following upon the violation of his orders. His authority over the people of India was unquestionably great, yet when he was arrested and sentenced to six years in prison, his influence melted

7. March 10, 1930.

away rapidly. When he was released after two years, the Non-cooperation movement was virtually dead.⁸

Though it believed that the second campaign was not likely to meet with any better fate than the first one, reckoned certain favourable factors contributing to the strength of the movement, in spite of the fact that rancour, in its opinion, was not so bitter against the British Government in 1930 as it was after the Amritsar massacre. Taking note of what it considered "the most serious disadvantage in the nationalist position" as regards the weaker cooperation of the Mohammedan population, it remarked :

But the Nationalist movement is now stronger, numerically and morally, as part of the general development of self-consciousness among the people of Asia. Another favourable factor would be—at least in Nationalist calculation—the Labor Government in England and its greater desire to avoid coercion.⁹

The *Christian Science Monitor* was of the firm opinion that the movement, like the previous one, would bring about untold miseries and sufferings for the people. Unlike the *Times* which very soberly appraised the strength and weakness of the second movement, the *Monitor* was emphatic in its belief that it would end in a complete failure. It said :

Mahatma Gandhi is once more advocating non-violent civil disobedience in India. This is done in the face of disasters which, by his own admission, befell India during his previous attempt to apply this policy . . . However, Gandhi and the extremist politicians who work with him are apparently convinced that the weapon which failed before can succeed now.¹⁰

8. March 10, 1930.

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*

The *Chicago Daily Tribune* in an editorial entitled "Opportunity for Little Brown Brothers", unlike the *Monitor*, refrained from speculating on the success or failure of the movement. It struck a different note. It conceded that the "white custodians" were never better equipped with the force needed to suppress their rebellious wards and never wanted less to use it, and that modern arms—available only to highly industrialized countries—had made primitive warfare folly to undertake and futile to wage. In spite of the ineffectiveness of primitive warfare against modern arms, the *Tribune* believed :

Gas, high explosives, airplanes, long-range and quick-firing guns, have given their possessors advantages which makes opposition madness to consider, but the very means of repression are an embarrassment to the Government confronted with the problems of unrest in the massed ranks of the brown brothers. . . . The strength of the supervising whites is their weakness in these moral days when strength is dreaded and when there is an avowed intention to make the next war civilized and painless. A recognition of the altruistic predicament of the bossing races prevails in the leadership of the bossed.¹¹

On the 12th of March, 1930, Gandhi started on foot with seventy-one of his picked volunteers from Sabarmati Ashram to a small village called Dandi on the seashore—a distance of two hundred miles—to break the Salt Law. The Government had the monopoly of the salt trade, and Gandhi thought it fit to launch his campaign of Civil Disobedience by breaking the law of the salt tax which he considered to be the most iniquitous of all from the poor man's point of view. The rebel procession, known as the "Dandi March," was widely reported in the Indian press, and as the people followed the progress of that marching column of pilgrims from day to day, the temperature of the

11. March 12, 1930.

country rose high. On the twenty-fourth day, Gandhi reached the seashore. Early next morning, soon after the morning prayers, he and his volunteers broke the Salt Law by picking up salt from the seashore. It was a signal for the army of non-violence to charge the citadel of British Imperialism. The 'General' had made his first attack, and the Government retaliated with all its might, bringing back, in modern times, memories of the dark ages. All over the country, in most of the towns and villages, the Salt Law was broken, and everywhere the Government tried to teach the people the virtues of civil obedience.

The Dandi March made front page headlines in practically all the important newspapers in the U.S.A. The meek-looking little ascetic was once again on the move to take up cudgels against the mighty Empire. So much importance was given to the news that the majority of the papers displayed it in bold headlines covering two or three columns. A number of papers published regular reports of the progress of the march. No news about India had ever hit such a high water mark.

To western eyes, India had always appeared to be the home of holy men, "yogis" with strange spiritual powers. Gandhi's emaciated appearance, his occasional fasts, his loin cloth, his insistence on truth and non-violence and the reverence with which the Indian people regarded him, confirmed to some extent that western notion about India. So to the average American, accustomed to think in more or less rational terms, there was something very mysterious in the ways of the Mahatma. What amazed Americans was not so much his fasts, his ascetic life and his loin cloth, or even his spirituality, but his role in politics. His personality added colour to the political movement; bereft of the latter aspect he would have gone virtually unnoticed as just another holy man. The average person expects a holy man to lead an obscure, retiring life, devoting his time to prayers and things of a different world. Here was a man, however, whom even some Christian clergymen did not hesitate to compare to Christ and who was leading his people in a political fight against one of the greatest

Empires of all time, using methods previously unknown or rather practised by individuals only. Politics had been considered the domain of worldly-minded people; spirituality had not much place in it. No wonder, then, that the spectacle of a handful of non-violent resisters, led by a holy man, attracted so much attention in the United States, as it did all over the world.

Even so, the Dandi March did not evoke comment from the press in proportion to the publicity given to the news. A few thinking men saw in the little Dandi incident the beginning of a new turn in world history. Among the few papers which commented was the *Baltimore Sun*. It said that Gandhi's form of protest and of demand for Indian independence constituted one of the most remarkable spectacles of recent history. The paper speculated on the various possible results of the march when it wrote that the procession might complete its journey uneventfully and be forgotten, or it might meet with violence on its way or lead to it, or it might have powerful and far-reaching effects upon the whole population of the sub-continent. In any case, the *Sun* believed that it was a gesture which in itself was not at all empty or silly but, on the contrary, full of immense possibilities. It summed up:

... There is no other political leader in the world today who could dare so deliberately to put aside all traditional instruments of leadership and put his faith in a ceremony so simple that it appears almost trifling.

Where his march of civil disobedience will really lead, no one at this moment can say. In the past Gandhi's most pacific moves have released forces which shocked even him. It is quite possible that this time the parade of seventy persons led by an old man will have profound influence upon the course of history. It is that contrast and that chance that make the campaign seem, in spite of itself, one of the most dramatic of events.¹²

12. March 13, 1930.

The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* considered the march to be the "strangest revolution of all time."

Mahatma Gandhi is marching to the sea. A brown wisp of a man, a puny ascetic, yet he defies the might of the British Empire and leads millions in "civil disobedience."

He has no arms and wants none. He has none of the paraphernalia of militarism.¹³

The *Springfield Daily Republican* remarked that the peculiar impressiveness of a notable historical event that was divorced from force and violence was to be found in the beginning of Mahatma Gandhi's march to the sea. Violence might come later, it thought, and the Government might feel obliged to use force, but the movement has begun in the pacifist spirit of Gandhi's great ethical teacher, Tolstoy. The paper found in the event a parallel to U.S.'s own history :

It is such a symbolic gesture as a poet might contrive, yet strikes at an economic grievance too. Salt is one of the necessities of life, and it is but human nature to resent governmental action to make it artificially dear by setting up a monopoly. The feeling is deep-rooted that the salt of the sea is for all and that all should be free to use it; in defying the government on this issue he has immemorial instinct behind him as well as patriotic hostility to British rule. Gandhi's challenge to the salt monopoly may be as notable an incident as Boston's short way with tea.¹⁴

The *Philadelphia Inquirer* pleaded for the strong hand to quell the movement :

13. March 14, 1930.

14. *Ibid.*

The Mahatma's doctrine of "civil disobedience" is in effect rebellion, and the probabilities are that the demonstrations of his followers will eventually have to be put down by force. It may be wise for the authorities to refrain from acting until the last possible moment, lest they unleash passions hard to control. But the oriental is not to be controlled by persuasion; the only argument that appeals to him is the strong hand.¹⁵

The *Los Angeles Times* had a significant word to say: "Between the watchful, waiting policy of the British Government and the torrid sun, Gandhi and his little band are having a heck of a time making an impression with that trek to the salt bed."¹⁶

Gandhi was arrested on May 5, 1930, under a statute more than one hundred years old. Like his march to the seashore, so the arrest too was big news for the American press. As a matter of fact, more publicity was given to this than to any news about India ever before. Almost all the dailies printed bold headlines on their front pages—those in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* and the *Atlanta Constitution* had long page-wide streamer headlines. But surprisingly, like the Dandi March, it did not evoke any editorial comment from quite a few papers, even from popular papers like the *New York Times* and the *Atlanta Constitution* which showed a great deal of interest in the news itself. Besides these two papers, the *Kansas City Star*, the *Baltimore Sun*, the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* and the *Los Angeles Times* failed to make any comment one way or the other. The few comments which did appear, came out almost immediately after the arrest. The opinions expressed may be said to be either neutral or critical of Gandhi and his movement. No newspaper had a word to say commending the Mahatma

15. March 14, 1930.

16. March 21, 1930.

or his campaign. The *New York Herald Tribune*, under the heading "Mr. Gandhi is Again Arrested," commented that the problem of revolution, whether conducted by force of arms or by moral earnestness, admitted of no final answer. According to this paper, if one accepted the position of the British administrators in India—that the immediate grant of independence or self-government was an almost physical impossibility—then nothing remained for them in dealing with the nationalist agitation save what might inevitably be a bad compromise. The *Herald Tribune* believed that agitation feeds alike on repression and on leniency; there was no sovereign rule for countering its effects, and the governing power was forced into an opportunism in which any one step could be judged only by its probable ultimate consequences, in the long run, for the general welfare. It summed up its argument with :

Thus the Indian government has moved with suddenness and eclipsed Mr. Gandhi. The immediate object, according to the official communique, is to prevent the violence and bloodshed which his leadership seemed more and more to be inciting. But as the Nationalist rioting and its kindred unrests did not appear to have risen to a really dangerous point, one may suppose that it was in reality a calculation in more subtle factors. The whole problem is to find some measure of popular support for whatever reform projects may be laid before the coming round-table conference. It is evident that the arrest of Mr. Gandhi might heighten Indian resistance to these projects, or that it might, by silencing a disturbing voice, lessen it.¹⁷

The *Chicago Daily Tribune* observed :

The British Indian Government has arrested Gandhi, whose civil disobedience had this as one of its pur-

17. May 6, 1930.

poses and prospects. The issue was supposed to indicate whether the Government was timid or confident and, if the arrest was made, whether the revolutionary activities were superficial or profound. The seizure of Gandhi answers one question.

British imperialism has a tradition of wisdom which may be largely fable. The proconsular gentlemen have a way of getting along well enough when they have normal conditions in hand, but their record of muddling an unquiet situation has its impressiveness. There's no proof that they have changed much since the American revolution, although they have been popularly believed to have taken a different road since 1783.¹⁸

It added that the Indian revolutionists were out of luck in one respect—it was the good fortune of the Americans to have had strong powers waiting for Great Britain to drop its guard and then take advantage of it; now the British had a sort of moral covenant with the United States. The Kaiser, who tried to make trouble in the Boer war, was in Holland. Russia had a great stake in Indian disorders, but the Soviets were such outcasts that aggression by them would put the white world on Great Britain's side.

The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* remarks have since become almost proverbial :

But Gandhi in jail may be much more troublesome than Gandhi outside. . . .

So far in this strange revolution, this defiance of the might of a great empire by a ragged philosopher, the score favors Gandhi. He has the government guessing. The Viceroy of India has imposed a censorship and prorogued the Indian parliament.¹⁹

18. *Ibid.*

19. May 6, 1930.

Summing up, it gave expression to the various facets of these strange events : whether or not Gandhi's arrest was a wise move was one of those hard political problems which usually could be answered only by future events. No clear-cut issue of right or wrong, in its opinion, was involved, but only a tangled question of expediency. British rule in India was a legal fact of long standing, and until it was replaced, measures to maintain it and preserve order could not be considered wrong. But on the other hand, neither could the efforts of Indian patriots to win independence be considered wrong, and it would be ridiculous to treat Gandhi as a criminal for refusing to pay the salt tax.

The *Springfield Daily Republican* also saw in Gandhi's arrest the unprecedented complexity of the situation :

In leaving the leader of the civil disobedience movement in India so long at large, the Government has shown great patience, and undoubtedly his arrest now, however welcome to the *sahibs* in India, was not sanctioned by Prime Minister MacDonald and his Cabinet without regret and misgivings. There is, indeed, a touch of the absurd in the resort under a British Labour Government to arbitrary powers conferred under a law more than a century old. So far as the treatment of Gandhi goes, this was the kindest course if he was to be arrested at all.²⁰

The *Christian Science Monitor* maintained that the arrest of Gandhi had become inevitable in view of the violence which the inauguration of civil disobedience had let loose and because of the increasing intransigence of the Mahatma's speeches. Replying to the criticism, which it believed was current both in Europe and the United States, that the Government had delayed too long, it observed :

It is obviously not easy for any government to arrest

20. May 7, 1930.

a "saint" for collecting salt on a bleak and deserted seashore, especially when the "saint" himself was courting arrest. On the other hand, there are objections to waiting until many innocent people have perished before arresting the instigator of lawlessness unless it is clear that to have arrested him before would have led to even greater bloodshed. But arrest is clearly justifiable as it is, and greatly as the Mahatma himself probably welcomes it as a possible further impulse to the cause to which he had devoted himself, it will not solve the almost unprecedented problem which confronts Great Britain in India today.²¹

The *Philadelphia Inquirer* was very critical of Gandhi and his campaign. In a leading article which betrayed a lack of appreciation of Gandhi's personality and the doctrine of non-violence, it wrote :

Mahatma Gandhi has been arrested at last. It was high time. The reluctance of the Government to take this step is easily understood. Yet it was inevitable from the first. "Passive resistance" is only a phrase. Open rebellion is the deliberate sequence.²²

In this critical strain, the paper went so far as to say that the conception of the Mahatma as a holy man who would enfranchise his countrymen by moral suasion was a sad distortion of the facts, that he was perfectly well aware that passive resistance was bound to lead to bloodshed, and that his followers had been staging their riots with his approval. The paper was of the opinion that a policy of conciliation would have only encouraged Gandhi to stir up unrest, and his arrest had not been ordered too soon.

It is sufficiently clear, however, that the situation is

21. May 8, 1930.

22. May 6, 1930.

full of perils, and that the Government will have to use both tact and resolution in dealing with it. The Indian masses are not vocal. Whether their self-appointed leaders really speak for them is a question.²³

The *Richmond Times Dispatch* was also critical of Gandhi. In a leading article headed "The Holy Man Arrested," it remarked that the individuals whose duty it was to protect the British Empire were faced with a task more tragic than any that had fallen to the lot of man since Pilate was called upon to uphold the established order. Acts of oppression were not so difficult when men were sustained by hate and rage, but the English could not hate Gandhi for his gospel of peace, humility, simplicity, decency and honesty. Even so the paper felt that Gandhi was a living menace to modern civilization, the foundation of which was material prosperity, and therefore, "the British must put Gandhi down, just as we would put him down if it were our institutions which were endangered, but there is no joy in the job."²⁴

It will be seen that the observations made by the daily press on Gandhi's arrest fell far short of expectations. In the periodicals, too, very little opinion was expressed. Of the few comments, the most notable were those made by *The Nation* and *The New Republic*. The former, always a champion of the cause of India, in a leading article entitled "Let India Go," maintained :

The idea of national liberty is abroad in India for better or for worse. Censorship of newspapers will not affect it. Neither will the arrest of Gandhi. If England is wise and far-seeing, the Simon Commission, whose report is momentarily expected, will find that India is ready for dominion status.²⁵

23. *Ibid.*

24. May 7, 1930.

25. May 14, 1930, 561.

The New Republic, one of the few periodicals with a progressive outlook, observed that the expected had happened in India when Gandhi was arrested under a statute 103 years old, according to which it was possible to keep him in prison indefinitely without bringing him to trial.

In 1922 when he was arrested and sentenced to six years in prison, the British made the excuse that this was done to protect his life ; he was in perfect health at the time, and two years later it was necessary to release him because he was about to die under the prison regime. This time no such ridiculous plea has been made ; Mr. Gandhi is frankly being locked up because the British are afraid to leave him free any longer.²⁶

Replying to the comment often made that Gandhi forced the Government to arrest him and that there was nothing else it could do, the journal observed that the Government could, even after the arrest, give a solemn pledge of Dominion status for India at a fixed date in the not too distant future ; the interval could be used for working out the details of the transfer of authority. "Even now," it continued, "it is not too late for such an action. In a few weeks it may be ; India may be plunged into a violent revolution which, whatever the outcome, will cost thousands of lives."²⁷

The *Christian Century*, in a very thoughtful editorial observed :

Gandhi in jail weighs heavily upon the conscience of mankind. Men may consider that his incarceration had become necessary. They may consider his methods wrong. They may consider his aims mistaken. Most men, it is probable, have serious misgivings as to the

26. May 14, 1930, 336.

27. *Ibid.*

wisdom and practicability of his course. But the thought of the Mahatma—the “great souled one”—in prison raises questionings that are not easily put down. Does the arrest of this apostle of revolution by “soul force” indicate a conflict between Gandhi’s world and our own, much more fundamental than any conflict between India and Britain?²⁸

Will Rogers, the famous cowboy philosopher, sent to the syndicate of newspapers that published his daily musings, this pungent comment on the arrest:

They’ve got Gandhi in jail in India. He preached “liberty without violence.” He swore all his followers “to truth and constant poverty.” He wanted nothing for himself, not even the ordinary comforts. He believed in “prayer and renunciation.” Well, naturally a man that’s holy couldn’t run at large these days. They figured that a crazy man like that was liable to get other people wanting those fanatical things. Civilization has got past “truth and poverty and renunciation” and all that old junk. Throw those nuts in jail.²⁹

Gandhi’s arrest did not slacken the struggle. On the other hand, as the days passed, the movement increased in vigour; so also did the Government’s repression. Untold miseries were inflicted on the people. Webb Miller, European News Manager of the United Press, who had gone out to India for first-hand factual information, reported:

In eighteen years of reporting in twenty-two countries, during which I have witnessed innumerable civil disturbances, riots, street fights and rebellions, I have never witnessed such harrowing scenes as at Dharasana Sometimes the scene was so painful

28. May 21, 1930, 647.

29. *Ibid.*

that I had to turn away momentarily. One surprising feature was the discipline of the volunteers. It seemed they were thoroughly imbued with Gandhi's non-violence creed.³⁰

Another eye-witness, noted columnist Brailsford, who had toured the country during the movement, wrote in the course of an article for the *Manchester Guardian*:

... At Calcutta some students, witnessing from a balcony of the University, the brutal beatings of participants in a peaceful procession, shouted "Cowards!" Two hours later, the police returned, into the University under an English officer, invaded the classroom and beat the students indiscriminately as they sat at their desks, till the walls were spotted with blood. The University made an official protest, but no punishment followed.³¹

Brailsford also wrote that a similar affair occurred at Lahore where the police, again under an English officer, invaded a college and beat not only students in the class, but the professors also.

Space does not permit descriptions of the innumerable instances of public atrocities and the ghastly tales of torture and physical injuries inflicted upon the votaries of non-violence. The stories of those brutalities, committed in the name of law and order by the custodians of the welfare of the poor down-trodden millions, reached the United States, for during that period there were a number of special correspondents in India who sent eye-witness accounts of the happenings to their papers. Twenty-four hours before the second volume of the Simon Report was made public, Negley Forson, correspondent of the *Chicago Daily News*, cabled to his paper a graphic description of an incident in Bombay, from which the *New Republic* quoted as follows:

30. The *New York Evening Telegram*, May 23, 1930.

31. January 12, 1931.

Heroic, bearded Sikhs, several with blood dripping from their mouths, refusing to move or even to draw their *karpans* (sacred swords) to defend themselves from a shower of lathi blows—

Hindu women and girls dressed in orange robes of sacrifice flinging themselves on the bridles of horses and imploring mounted police not to strike male volunteers as they were Hindus themselves—

Stretcher bearers waiting beside little islands of prostrate, unflinching, immovable *Satyagrahis* who had flung themselves on the ground grouped about their women upholding the flag of Swaraj—

These were the scenes on the Maidan Esplanade today.

Dark-faced Mahratti policemen in their yellow turbans marched along in column led by English sergeants across the field toward the waiting crowd... Crash! Whack! Whack! At last the crowd broke. Only the orange-clad women were left standing beside the prostrate figures of crumpled men..

A minute's lull and then, with flags flying, another column of volunteers marched onto the vast green field. A column of Mahrattis marched to meet them. They clashed...and again there was the spectacle of the green field dotted with a line of fallen bodies... Here sat a little knot of men, their heads bowed, submitting to a rain of lathi blows—refusing to move until completely laid out..

I stood within five feet of a Sikh leader as he took the lathi blows. He was a short, heavily muscled man. The blows came—he stood straight. His turban was knocked off... He closed his eyes as the blows fell—until at last he swayed and fell to the ground. No other Sikhs had tried to shield him, but now, shouting defiance, they wiped away the blood streaming

from his mouth Restored to consciousness, the Sikh gave me a smile and stood up for more.

In this episode of a single day in a single city, five hundred men stood and let themselves be battered into unconsciousness by the police, without lifting a finger in "non-violent non-cooperation."³²

The incident described here was typical of police action against the non-violent Congress volunteers. With the heightening of repression, also increased the will to resist, and *vice versa*. All the correspondents who had witnessed those scenes agreed that it took the highest degree of insensibility to be an onlooker when the police beat the faces of non-violent resisters who merely maintained their positions until they were pounded into the relief of unconsciousness. In the context of such tragedies, the Government of India wrote in its annual report to the British Parliament complimenting the loyal police:

. . . One of the most striking features of the Civil Disobedience Movement had been the staunchness, courage and endurance which the police had shown despite the insidious attempts which had been made to subvert their loyalty and the perpetual vilifications and abuses to which they had been exposed. During the period of unprecedented stress, they had, as a body, acted with great restraint.³³

The terrible assaults of the English on defenceless people in the name of law and order—people whose only crime was the love of their country—was the blackest spot on the much-lauded British justice and fair play. The British were undoubtedly in a predicament. People would not obey; they would not fight. Such obduracy was indeed maddening. In conventional rebellion the rebels use lethal weapons and come into an armed

32. July 2, 1930, 165-66.

33. *India in 1930-31*, p. 106.

clash if they did not choose to obey. They could be classified, if you so chose, as impudent rascals and mercilessly struck down. British propriety could understand that, for under such conditions they could seize the cudgel or the gun and teach the malcontents the virtues of obedience. But Gandhi was a most unconventional rebel. He was fighting on a moral plane with weapons never before used by any rebel. With every lathi blow, with every skull broken or rib fractured—down went the moral justification of the Empire and British prestige in the eyes of the world.

It is not within the province of this study to dilate at length on the many and various forms of repression employed by the Government. As the days passed, its scope and form widened. The official historian of the Indian National Congress wrote : “The oppression by the authorities (in Gujerat) was so great that 80,000 people migrated from British territory to the villages in the neighbouring Baroda State.”³⁴

An event in Peshawar in the North West Frontier Province not only showed repression in the worst form, but demonstrated the efficacy of Gandhi’s teaching to the whole world. The Pathans, noted for their courage and characteristic turbulence, set an unique example to the rest of the country by showing a remarkable exhibition of discipline and peaceful courage before machine-gun fire. The incident was very significant in the history of the Civil Disobedience Movement.

On the 23rd of April, 1930, in Peshawar, the capital of the North West Frontier Province, a crowd gathered before a police station to protest against the arrest of local Congress leaders. The authorities opened fire on the crowd and later troops were ordered to help the police. There was firing practically throughout the day, and a number of people were shot dead. Rigid censorship of news was imposed, and a Government communique was issued placing all blame on the local Nationalist leaders. Mahatma Gandhi’s paper, *Young India*, gave a detailed description of the incident, from which *The Nation* quoted :

34. Sitaramayya, *op. cit.*, p. 415.

When those in front fell down wounded by the shots, those behind came forward with their breasts bared and exposed themselves to the fire, so that some persons got as many as twenty-one bullet wounds in their bodies, and all the people stood their ground without getting into a panic. A young Sikh boy came and stood in front of a soldier and asked him to fire at him, which the soldier unhesitatingly did, killing him. Similarly an old woman, seeing her relatives and friends being wounded, came forward, was shot and fell down wounded. . . . The crowd kept standing at the same spot facing the soldiers and was fired at from time to time, until there were heaps of wounded and dying lying about. The Anglo-Indian paper of Lahore, which represents the official view, itself wrote to the effect that the people came forward one after another to face the firing and when they fell wounded they were dragged back and others came forward to be shot at. This state of things continued from eleven till five o'clock in the evening. . . .

Two facts are noteworthy in this connection. One is that of all the dead collected by the Congressmen there was not one single instance where there was the mark of a bullet in the back. Further, all the wounds were bullet wounds and there was no trace of grape shot. Neither the police nor the military nor anybody else alleges that there was any stick or weapon, blunt or sharp, with the persons in the crowd. The attitude of the crowd and the splendid hold that the Congress had on the people are evidenced by the fact that in spite of the presence of the British troops patrolling the city, the picketing went on without a break and the batches of volunteers were sent according to the program.³⁵

The firing at Peshawar was not an isolated instance. During the course of the movement, the Government took similar action

35. *The Nation*, June 25, 1930, 741.

many a time and at various places. It was not always that in such incidents only the non-resistors were involved ; sometimes the people (non-volunteers) resorted to retaliation in varying degrees. But the news of such happenings did not reach America in an authentic form. As ever, the news agencies were controlled, and it was difficult for the American press to get accurate reports. *The Nation* stated :

But the news from India, which has increased greatly in volume, is filled with riots and rumours of riots. In the past, reports from India have too often been unsatisfactory both as to the reliability and as to emphasis. In the present crisis, some of the dispatches seem to reflect the political sympathies of the reporters. Never was there greater need of unprejudiced reporting.³⁶

The same journal again observed :

Lord Irwin has revived press censorship in India. It is true that the native nationalist press is very sensational and provocative, but it has been so for a long time, and the fact that the Viceroy feels that he must employ the weapon of suppression indicates the seriousness of the present situation.³⁷

A week later, it said : "Censorship on press messages to and from India was put into effect shortly after the Mahatma's arrest."³⁸ In this context, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* commented in an editorial entitled "British Force in India" :

The censorship has been effectively administered for the most part and the disagreeable facts, not violently

36. *Ibid.*, April 16, 1930, 438.

37. *Ibid.*, May 7, 1930, 533.

38. *Ibid.*, May, 14 1930, 561.

spread even in the United States, are very softly spoken in Great Britain. . . Without the censorship Great Britain would be in danger of taking the old place of the unspeakable Turk, and it hasn't found a way of getting out of the hole.³⁹

The Nation had always deplored the lack of news from India and the fact that whatever news did reach them was biased. During the movement, however, there were a few good American correspondents : Negley Farson of the Chicago Daily News Foreign Service, Webb Miller of United Press and Charles Dailey of the *Chicago Tribune*, who contrived to give the outside world a vivid picture of the gruesome happenings in India. But no news agency or syndicate had any American staff correspondent permanently resident in India to supply unbiased news which only an American could furnish. A great majority of the newspapermen who wrote or cabled news from India were British. On this question, *The New Republic* wrote :

The one important source of American opinion has been the Indian news reports in the columns of our press. Very much of this news, probably more than half of it, has come from British sources through Reuters, the British news service which has a cooperative arrangement with the Associated Press. This news, written by Englishmen for Englishmen and passed by the British censorship, certainly has not been unduly tender of the Indians.⁴⁰

American sympathy for the cause of India was more pronounced during the 1930 movement than in 1921. Much had happened during the period to educate the public there about India and in 1930 the people in the United States could not easily swallow the fiction that Indians were a semi-barbarous people.

39. December 12, 1930.

40. August 20, 1930, 5.

The oft-repeated British thesis that Indians were not fit for self-government because they were a conglomeration of diverse races and creeds with many castes each antagonistic to the other, did not seem tenable. The pro-Indian undercurrent which had been growing all those years, was quite strong in 1930. The personality of Gandhi, the graphic descriptions by U.S. correspondents of the ghastly attacks of the police on unarmed Nationalists, and the suffering of the people in the cause of independence without retaliation or rancour in their hearts against their oppressors, raised the Nationalists in the estimation of thinking Americans. It was hard for them to take Gandhi's followers, as the British propagandists would have them believe, to be a riotous horde of extremists out for more mischief and to disturb the peace of the country. Even a casual American reader of the Indian news who had no deep interest in India's problems, would, with his natural love of freedom and sympathy for the under-dog, appraise the problem in simple terms and in the best American tradition. "Why shouldn't the people of India be allowed to rule themselves?" he would ask. It was difficult for the British propagandists to answer this question ; neither, perhaps, did the average American have the time or inclination to follow any argument very closely. To the more interested and thoughtful reader, the British propaganda carried no weight ; even if he could be convinced that there would be chaos if the British left, he would recall the plea of the Nationalists who always maintained that they would rather have chaos under their own rule than order imposed by someone else. Nor could the Americans be convinced that the nationalist demand could be ignored ; the argument that they were only a handful meant nothing for they knew it for an accepted fact that there had never been more than a handful of revolutionaries in any revolution on record. As for the inarticulate masses, the "dumb millions," as Gandhi called them, for whom the British always claimed they had a soft corner in their hearts, Americans did not need to be told as to who could claim their allegiance with more confidence—the British Government or Mahatma Gandhi. One easily gathers from the press of that

time that a distinct pro-Indian current was running in America and the British were aware of this fact. There was, of course, a minority of opinion susceptible to British propaganda, who gave expression to views that ran counter to the main current.

The most ardent champions of this view were the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Christian Science Monitor*. They used the old argument that different races and creeds, hostile to each other, were not conducive to self-government, and they believed that chaos and bloodshed would follow if the British removed their strong hand. The *Christian Science Monitor*, under the heading "Can Gandhi Keep Control ?" wrote :

Even sympathetic observers of India's agitation against British rule question whether that country could maintain orderly government if the British administration were withdrawn. So bitter are the animosities between Indian religious groups and social classes that there is every likelihood that any achievement of complete independence at this time would almost surely be followed by a period of near-chaos.⁴¹

The paper also predicted that "India's Nationalist Movement will pass through many stages before it is finished,"⁴² and remarked that Gandhi's campaign, while stirring up much excitement among the Hindus, had evoked no general movement among the more responsible Indian leaders of political thought. It pointed out that the Mohammedans and the Sikhs had kept aloof from the movement. Minimizing the influence of Gandhi, it said :

Gandhi's chief supporters are Hindu students, always an element to be reckoned with seriously where political agitation in India is concerned. These young men, organized as the Indian Nationalist

41. April 23, 1930.

42. *Ibid.*

Congress Volunteers, have been leaders in minor breaches of the salt laws in many parts of India.⁴³

The *Richmond Times-Dispatch* shared the views of the *Monitor*, and was of the opinion that while Gandhi was advocating passive disobedience to England's dominion over his people, it was likely that the program which he was setting forth for his countrymen would become too large for him to handle easily, with the result that mere "passiveness" would not satisfy the temperamental mass of India. Though he seemed to have gained the faith of his country, which as a Nationalist he had held for some time, still, in that paper's view, when his plans would meet with definite rebuke from the British it would be doubtful that he would be able to hold the confidence he had gained from his disciples. The *Times-Dispatch* further remarked that Gandhi was working against a power ten times stronger than his organization, and probably would not be able to further his ideas of passive resistance enough to give India complete freedom.

And should India be given her freedom, which seems highly improbable, she would be unable to take care of herself and organize and maintain a capable government, because her people need protection and guidance. India can stand protection and obedience to experience much better than she could stand an internal turmoil such as her complete independence would create.⁴⁴

The *Commonweal*, writing under the heading "Gandhi's India," gave the usual description about India—"a continent reposing upon deeply rooted cultural antagonisms, a cradle of religion, caste and variety of language"—and asserted :

On behalf of the British it may be said that they

43. *Ibid.*, April 12, 1930.

44. The *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, March 16, 1930.

would probably be glad to give India a "dominion status" with as much self-government as Canada now enjoys—if such a thing were possible. It simply is not. And here Gandhi himself would seem to be the more pertinent illustration.⁴⁵

In American press opinion, there were three choices confronting the British Government. It could set India free ; it could grant Dominion status ; or it could appeal to the sword. None of the American papers believed that Great Britain was going to grant independence to India, although the more liberal-minded section maintained that it should. Majority opinion favoured Dominion status ; it believed in the inherent right of the Indians to rule themselves, but maintained that the vast majority of the people were incapable of self-government without some training. Hence, in their opinion, Dominion status was the best possible way to reach the goal of independence. A certain section of the Press did not think the Indians were fit for self-rule, at least for a long time to come, and did not believe that Britain would ever relinquish her control over India. *The New Republic* wrote :

Whatever we may think of the desirability of complete freedom for India, it is at the present moment a political impossibility. Great Britain may yield something under pressure, but it is fantastic to suppose that she will yield as much as that in one sudden act.⁴⁶

The journal held that Dominion status was a logical step on the road to complete independence.

The *New York Times* held similar views. In the first place, it did not believe that independence could be won by non-violent means. "To set out to win India's independence by

45. May 21, 1930, 66.

46. May 7, 1930, 313.

non-violent means was to attempt the impossible.”⁴⁷ The movement started by Gandhi was revolutionary in character, and the only way bloodshed could be stopped was for the British to surrender, which was impossible. The best interest of the people of India lay in the steady advance toward self-government, it remarked.

British troops are not firing upon native crowds in defense of a Bourbon policy. India's representatives have been invited to meet the representatives of the British nation in a conference of which the outcome is humanly certain to be Dominion rule for India within a few years. Very few reasonable men will contend that it is worth while to let loose revolution and repression for the sake of a delay—in India of immemorial patience—or for the sake of the shadowy difference between independence and Dominion rule.⁴⁸

In spite of the growing interest of the U.S. press in Indian problems, one cannot fail to see on close observation that a certain section of the Press laboured under some misapprehension or confusion about the Indian issue. Their belief in the inherent right of the people to rule themselves led to their championing the cause of the Indians. At the same time they feared that India's vast chaos of races and religions might prove fatal and plunge the country into bloodshed. They were strengthened in this view by the example of internal strife in China. The *Review of Reviews* wrote :

It may be that the Indian peoples are unfitted for complete self-government. Its vast chaos of races and religions might insure failure and rapid destruction of public order and organization. But it is at least as hard to see how millions of people can be denied their

47. May 11, 1930.

48. *Ibid.*

right to liberty, even to self-misgovernment, in an age of self-determination and the rights of peoples.

It would seem to be the misfortune of Britain in India, as in Ireland and, indeed as in America a century and a half ago, to give too little and to give that little too late. Yet in simple justice one must say of the British that they have already given more, resigned a greater fraction of their once absolute power, than any people has ever done under like circumstances.⁴⁹

It went on to say that so far as one could judge, the Indian drama was more likely to last a generation than a decade, to be marked by innumerable crises rather than by any brief and decisive event. But if history was any teacher, the end was assured and one of the most brilliant and magnificent of imperial adventures was steadily drawing to a close.

A month later, the *Review*, commenting on the Simon Report on India, left aside its belief in the right of the people to govern themselves, and viewed the Indian problem in the same light as did the Simon Report. It now maintained that, in view of the fact that the vast mass of Indian population was totally unfit for self-government, that India was not a nation but a chaos of races and religions, the probability that the withdrawal of British arms and administrations would be like the signal for domestic crash and foreign invasion, could not be overlooked.

The most practical and probably the most profitable form of solution of the issue would doubtless be the long delay of British retirement and the slow but sure education of India's millions to democratic rule.⁵⁰

The *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat* also gave expression to views which betrayed a lack of consistency. In an editorial

49. July 1930, 66.

50. *The Review of Reviews*, August 1930, 44.

on May 7, 1930, it dwelt at some length on the Indian problem under the heading "Britain and India," and observed that though Gandhi's movement started with the purest of motives—that of securing the independence of India by non-violent means—it would drench the country in blood. Considering it "absurd" that independence could be achieved without completely overcoming British power in a prolonged and terrible war, the paper wrote :

It may be regarded as absolutely certain that Great Britain will not grant the independence Gandhi demands. . . . Besides that there is not the slightest doubt that nothing worse could happen for the people of India than the full independence Gandhi demands. The diverse and largely ignorant elements of India's vast population are not the stuff from which successful self-government can be created off-hand. . . . Full independence with them would be complete and calamitous chaos. Therefore, for themselves and for itself, Great Britain must maintain its domination.⁵¹

On the other hand, in its concluding lines the paper admitted that there had been a great awakening in India since the World War and that its people had learned something of the nature of the world outside of India, and Great Britain " . . . will have to make great concessions to this India sooner or later, and it will take the wisest powers of its great statesmanship to solve the problem that confronts it here."⁵²

As has already been observed, a small section of the Press had pro-British leanings. Prominent among such papers were the *Christian Science Monitor* and the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. They viewed the problem through British eyes and based their opinions on arguments drawn from British sources. The *Inquirer*, inspired by an article from the pen of the Marquess of

51. May 7, 1930.

52. *Ibid.*

Zetland which the paper believed gave "a very clear and concise account of the present situation in India," came to the conclusion that

... to give India independence or even Dominion status would clearly increase rather than diminish the difficulties of the situation. Every Englishman who knows India is perfectly well aware of this.⁵³

The *Monitor* also believed that the Indians were not fit to rule themselves and that the British should not relax their authority. Quoting at some length from the Marquess of Zetland's article which gave statistics on the different antagonistic groups in India, on account of the varied population of the country and the caste system, the paper came to the inevitable inference that India, if left to her own political devices, would all too soon present to the world a spectacle more shocking than that of China.

... For throughout it all, in the United States, at least, sounds the clear note of conviction that difficult as is the situation in India, the British are by nature and experience best fitted to cope with it, and that no immediate relaxation of their authority over its heterogeneous peoples is to be desired or to be feared.⁵⁴

Three months later the *Philadelphia Inquirer* wrote :

... Dominion status in the full sense of the phrase would give too much power to those unable to wield it, while independence would leave the whole country a prey to anarchy. In one form or another, England must have a reasonable measure of control.⁵⁵

53. September 27, 1930.

54. December 1, 1930.

55. December 22, 1930.

The riots in India gave added weight to the argument that India was not fit for self-government. Fortunately for the British, Hindu-Muslim disturbances in the big cities have always come as a relief to the authorities. They inevitably gave a setback to the nationalist movement. It is indeed remarkable that riots had a tendency to break out only when the movement for the emancipation of the people from the British yoke was at its height and the hopes and aspirations of the people were focused on the movement. The British authorities were very touchy to the suggestion that the riots were engineered by interested parties. The disturbances at this particular time not only gave a setback to the nationalist movement, but had a great propaganda value abroad. They confirmed the view that the Hindus and Muslims would fly at each other's throat should Britain relinquish her control.

Under the heading "The Indian Problem Illustrated", the *Philadelphia Inquirer* wrote.

Race riots between Hindu and Muslim at Cawnpore, suppressed by British troops after many persons, including women and children, had been killed, as well as the less serious disorders which attended Gandhi's return to Karachi, offer further illustrations, if any were needed, of the serious results which would follow any weakening of British authority in India.⁵⁶

Blame for bloodshed in India would always be placed on the shoulders of Mahatma Gandhi for releasing subversive forces.

More rioting in India emphasizes the fact that Gandhi has loosed forces he cannot control even if he wishes. "Civil Disobedience" was from the first a fiction. It was certain to lead to violence, as Gandhi must have known.⁵⁷

56. March 27, 1931.

57. *Ibid.*, March 31, 1931.

Of the critical American opinion, the minority section considered the Indians unfit, not only for independence but even for Dominion status, and desired the continuance of British control. That section of the press, however, which believed in the inherent right of the people to rule themselves, wished well for India, but considering the many difficulties, they felt that complete independence at once would create chaos. Therefore, they favoured Dominion status or a substantial grant of reforms by the British.

Liberal opinion, which viewed the Indian aspirations with sympathy, was pronounced in its views. It was not in any way influenced by the exaggerated accounts of propagandists, and did not consider the differences of race, religion and culture sufficient obstacles in the way of India's right to self-government. As a matter of fact, some journals discerned a sense of unity in all the diverse elements of Indian society. *The New Republic* was one. It wrote, "Despite diversities in caste, language and religion, India had always had a sense of oneness. It has found a basis of unity in a common intellectual heritage."⁵⁸

The approach of *The Nation* epitomised the attitude of the Liberal Press.

From the day of its foundation, this journal has been firmly committed to the doctrine that no amount of good government inflicted upon a people by officials from another country can take the place of self government, however bad. This may be, as some say, carrying theory to indefensible ends. We can, however, no more yield our position than could the American abolitionists who were told that if they persisted in their mad demands for freedom for Negroes, the United States would become nothing but a shambles.⁵⁹

58. January 8, 1930, 189.

59. January 1, 1930, 5.

Unlike the critics of India, this liberal journal did not lay the blame for the unrest and rioting at Gandhi's door. It maintained that the masses showed great discipline in their struggle. "Never in the history of the world has there been such amazing self-control by great masses of people."⁶⁰

It was this liberal section which was vehemently criticized by the British press for its pro-Indian sentiments, and it was this section which gave great publicity to the cause of the Indian nationalist movement. Professor Edward Thompson, who wrote a series of articles for the London *Times* on American opinion and India, severely criticized the attitude of the American press toward Britain's policy. After criticizing the general trend of the press, he took exception to the opinions of *The New Republic*. Of his several accusations, the first was that the paper was guilty of unfairness in printing the text of Gandhi's letter to the Viceroy without also publishing the Viceroy's reply. The second was that when Gandhi published a list of terms on which he would negotiate with the British Government, the journal called them "just and reasonable" and said that a heavy responsibility would rest upon the British Government if it ignored the offer. These and several other charges were hurled against that as well as other journals. In reply, after making a few observations on Thompson's remarks, *The New Republic* said :

There was no reason why this paper was under obligation to reprint the Viceroy's letter to Mr. Gandhi or the statement of the Government at the time of his arrest. *The New Republic* is not a daily newspaper whose duty it is to print all the news. On the contrary, one important task of *The New Republic* is to print the news which does not appear in the daily papers. Mr. Gandhi's letter to the Viceroy had been almost overlooked by the American press. The

60. *Ibid.*, June 4, 1930, 638.

New York *Times*, which has published by far the most voluminous accounts of the Indian situation, printed only 300 words of his 1500-word letter. The attitude of the British, on the other hand, had been adequately and repeatedly set forth. Almost every day for a week, at the time of Mr. Gandhi's arrest, the Viceroy made a speech or published a document giving in detail the Government's arguments in favour of its course of action and these were all reported in ample detail. So far as we can learn, Mr. Gandhi's letter was given less space in the other chief American papers than in the *Times*, or was ignored, while the Government's view was given much space.⁶¹

The New Republic's observations on Professor Thompson's allegations throw ample light on the attitude of the U.S. press. The liberal section was greatly impressed by Gandhi and his non-violent fight. It believed that he was a restraining influence on the tendency of the people to resort to violence in retaliation. In this connection, the journal wrote some months back :

... Among the Hindus there are, however, thousands of persons who are not satisfied with his non-resistant philosophy, who feel that the force of the English must be answered with force of their own. If Gandhi should be imprisoned, or should die as a result of some incident in connection with his present campaign, the tidal wave of hatred would break, with consequences which it is impossible to foresee.⁶²

The *Christian Century*, which greatly admired Gandhi for all that he stood for, remarked that he had managed to set love in opposition to force ; non-violence in opposition to the iron hand ; soul force in opposition to world might, and recalled a like episode in Jerusalem some twenty centuries ago :

61. August 20, 1930, 6.

62. March 26, 1930, 137.

... his trial brings all the west to judgment. Pilate's seat stands again in the midst of the nations. Does Gandhi appear to us a fanatic, fantastic, unfathomable? So likewise appeared another who confronted the mightiest empire of his time before the seat of a Judean proconsul, nineteen hundred years ago this week. "My kingdom," he said, to the baffled and exasperated Roman, "my kingdom is not of your world." Is the kingdom which Gandhi seeks of ours?⁶³

Commenting upon the situation in the early stages of the movement, *The Nation* felt that whatever the Government should decide about Gandhi, and whether the campaign failed or not, the events then taking place made it seem impossible that the relationship of India to Great Britain could ever again be what it had been in the past. "India's demand for self-government can no longer be answered either by a recital of the good works of the British raj or by reiteration of the opinion that Indians are not fit to rule themselves."⁶⁴

In an editorial entitled "Alternatives in India," *The New York Times* made a liberal appraisal of the situation :

Yet despite such reservations, the historic argument for liberty stands. If India is determined to be free, one cannot go on indefinitely pleading the benefits of British rule. Neither can one use in the old form the argument that India is not yet ready for independence.⁶⁵

The Liberal Press expressed its opinion on practically every important incident and noteworthy aspect of the movement. In most of their comments, the papers and journals not only supported India's cause, but at times came out with sharp remarks against the critics of the movement. After Gandhi's

63. April 16, 1930, 488.

64. April 23, 1930, 478.

65. May 28, 1930.

arrest on May 5, 1930, *The Nation* wrote that with all sympathy for MacDonald and his Government, the liberal opinion must continue to urge that the natives of India be given back their country, to rise or fall as they should decide.

... We cannot see how anybody who believes in American institutions and the principles underlying them can hesitate. India has just as much right to take over its own government today as the Americans had in 1776. It is not for us, nor for the British either, to sit in judgment upon the fitness of these people to rule themselves or to prophesy what the future may hold in store for them.⁶⁶

The New Republic, which also ardently supported the cause of Indian liberty, agreed with the above view. It did not believe in the British policy of a Simon Commission of inquiry for ascertaining the fitness of the people to take another stride toward self-government. It maintained that no people or group of people ever achieved self-government against the force of an alien power as the result of a dispassionate inquiry into their competence to exercise it, and rightly observed :

... If a Simon Commission had been sent to the American colonies in 1755, it would undoubtedly have found that they would require many years of development before they were ready for independence. The leaders of the nationalist movement were, many of them, fanatical ; there were the problems presented by our long frontiers open to attack by wild natives and foreign powers ; by the intermixture of nationalities and religions in our population ; by the institution of Negro slavery. Those who actively desired independence were unquestionably in the minority. Such a report would have been true in detail ; indeed,

⁶⁶. May 21, 1930, 588.

nobody can be sure today that this nation might not have been better governed if it could have remained subject to the British crown. But all this is irrelevant in view of that contagious spirit of self-assertion which came to dominate the colonies. They wanted independence and they proposed to have it ; years of warfare could not suppress the desire. When this spirit is abroad, alien government, even if it seems more fit in the abstract, is really incompetent.⁶⁷

The British were gravely disturbed by America's attitude towards India. The *New York Times* published a news item which said :

An English audience was told today that anti-British and pro-Indian feeling was far more prevalent in the United States today than pro-British opinion in connection with the present upheaval in India. The speaker was Professor L. F. Rushbrook Williams . . .⁶⁸

In another news item from London, the *Times* again reported that an appeal to American Churches to present the true facts of the Indian situation had been made by Sir Henry Lunn speaking at the World Peace Demonstration at Leeds in connection with the Wesleyan Methodist Conference there. Deploing what he called "the tragic misrepresentation" of the attitude of the majority of Englishmen towards India's future and towards the political movement, Sir Henry said, among other things, "I hope it will be possible for the Federal Council of the Church of Christ officially to take action to investigate the facts from both sides and to show the American press the truth of the situation."⁶⁹ No less a person than the Marquess of Zetland also deplored the attitude of the American

67. Sept. 3, 1930, p. 58.

68. June 20, 1930.

69. July 23, 1930.

press with regard to the Indian situation. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* reported :

In the October number of *FOREIGN AFFAIRS*, the Marquess of Zetland gives a very clear and concise account of the present situation in India. So much anti-British propaganda has been created for Gandhi and his followers who, if they had their way, would throw the whole country into anarchy.⁷⁰

Professor Edward Thompson wrote a series of articles for the *London Times* on American opinion and India, in which he made several accusations against *The New Republic*. In this connection, the latter wrote :

It is regrettable, however, that some of the British discussion of the American attitude has thus far been conducted in unrealistic terms. To read certain comments on this subject in the British press, no one would suppose that the Indians had any sort of legitimate grievance or that any American except one very stupid so shamefully misled could support their aspirations.⁷¹

The main charges were that the U.S. periodicals which presented the Indian case were deliberately unfair to Britain and that due to the false statements about India in journals and books, opinion in the States had been led astray. The inference was that had it not been for those falsehoods, opinion would have favoured the British cause. Some even went to the length of stating that American support for India's aspirations was an important factor in determining the attitude of some of the chief Indian leaders.

In order to counteract the pro-Indian sentiment in the U.S.A. during the Civil Disobedience Movement and to divert it to

70. September 27, 1930.

71. August 20, 1930, 5.

pro-British channels, the British Government resorted to the old method of censorship of news from India and to extensive propaganda. A number of articles appeared in journals in America and Britain written by persons both British and American whose authenticity apparently could not be doubted. Their main thesis was that there was nothing much wrong in India. There was, of course, a little rioting here and there which was not of much serious consequence. The rioters were mostly small groups of irreconcilables and were supported by some Soviet agents. Gandhi, they maintained, was losing all his following and the movement was certain to die a natural death. Some of them said that the British Government had every intention of granting home rule to the Indians as soon as possible ; the Simon Commission and the Round Table Conference bore testimony to this contention. Reference was, however, made, in passing, that the pace of home rule would be slow, as the Indians were not yet fit to shoulder the responsibility of looking after their own affairs. The argument would be fortified by the old story of the irreconcilable elements of castes and creeds in Indian society. Concerning British propaganda in the United States, *The New Republic* commented :

British propaganda in America is quite as extensive as the Indian or more so, and it has been skilful and persistent. If, in spite of this fact, many Americans lean to the cause of India, we suggest that perhaps that cause has some innate merits which are deserving of consideration.⁷²

The most notable of the official propagandists who visited the U.S.A. to present the British point of view was Professor L. F. Rushbrook Williams, who was for some time Foreign Minister in the State of Patiala. On the nature of Professor Williams' mission to America, *The New Republic* commented editorially :

72. *Ibid.*

The good luck which proverbially serves the British Empire was never better exemplified than in the arrival of Professor Rushbrook Williams in New York. . . . At the moment when American liberal opinion is gravely concerned over the turn of events in India and inclined to be harshly critical of British policy, along comes Mr. Williams to assure us that all is, on the whole, well. The Indian unrest is about to end, he says, and will be all over by October. The outbreaks have been sporadic, the work of "the turbulent element" from the bazaars. Gandhi is not regarded as a real political leader. India cannot be united because it is composed of many peoples and many cults. Mr. Williams is travelling privately, and it is of course sheer coincidence which causes him to bob up in New York at the moment when the British case so badly needs stating. It reminds us of the similar coincidence by which Sir Gilbert Parker arrived to tell us, during the War, how sweet and pure were the Allies and how dastardly were the Germans.⁷³

Interesting light was thrown on the Professor's work in America by *The Nation* :

. . . When it is remembered that Professor Williams is envoy at London of the Chamber of Indian Princes, probably the most reactionary body in India, it is easy to understand why he calls Gandhi a "fanatical reactionary." Even so, it seems hardly necessary to produce "from among his private state papers" as new and conclusive evidence against Gandhi and his movement, the "confession" (consisting of Gandhi's strictures on the machine age and modern science generally) which was openly printed in 1909 and which, according to C. F. Andrews, one of Gandhi's closest friends, Gandhi would probably modify if he re-cast it at this time. Why Professor Williams should be going immediately to

73. May 21, 1930, 2.

Washington to report on the Indian situation to the British Embassy of a Labour Government is hard to understand.⁷⁴

The most momentarily effective but ultimately damaging pro-British propaganda was done by one Miss Katherine Mayo. After a tour of a few months in India, she came out with a book, *Mother India*, in which she painted Indian life in the worst colours. *The New Republic* remarked :

Only one book about India has sold in large numbers in the United States in recent years, or has had any appreciable effect upon opinions here. That is Katherine Mayo's *Mother India*, a work which is cruelly unfair to the Indians and their cause and is the most effective pro-British propaganda ever written.⁷⁵

The book was strenly condemned by sober opinion in the U.S., and in defence of *Mother India* Harry H. Field wrote another entitled *After Mother India* which was published by Harcourt, Brace and Company of New York and which also contributed much to vilify the name of India. In a letter to *The New Republic*, C. F. Andrews wrote :

In spite of the profession of giving full documentation, the ignorance displayed about India in these books is so crude that one is surprised to find them carrying weight either with the American or British public as serious publications. Unfortunately, the peculiar style of propaganda which they represent seems to captivate a certain type of mind. They offer on the surface a psuedo-scientific appearance by copious quotations from documents which are unknown to the reader and often given without their full context. When analyzed, the

74. May 28, 1930, 612.

75. August 20, 1930, 5.

scientific side of things breaks to pieces, because there has been no detailed study of the subject such as would correct false and hasty impressions.

There is one chapter in this book, called "The Messenger," which has nothing to do with "Mother India" itself, but is a deliberate and provocative attack on Mahatma Gandhi's private character.⁷⁶

Mother India caused a sensation in India. Not all the Indians could pocket this slander to their motherland. Almost immediately, there was published *Uncle Sham*—a book from the pen of an Indian author, K. L. Gauba—which painted America in Miss Mayo's own colours. The book aroused considerable interest in India and soothed the feelings of quite a few. This was followed by another reply to Miss Mayo's "drain inspector's report" as Mahatma Gandhi had humorously described it, namely *Unhappy India* by the veteran Congress leader, Lajpat Rai of Lahore.

Now to continue the narrative :

On the 21st of January, 1931, when the Conference was formally closed, the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress passed a resolution that it was

... not prepared to give any recognition to the proceedings of the so-called Round Table Conference between certain members of the British Parliament, the Indian Princes and individual Indians selected by the Government from amongst its supporters and not elected as their representatives by any section of the Indian people.⁷⁷

On January 25, 1931, Lord Irwin issued a statement wherein he

76. *Ibid.*, January 8, 1930, 199.

77. Sitaramayya, *op. cit.*, p. 424.

declared that the Government would release the Congress leaders from jail to enable them to consider their participation in the second Round Table Conference. He also said :

My Government will impose no conditions on the releases, because we feel that the best hope for restoration of peaceful conditions lies in discussion being conducted by those concerned under terms of unconditional liberty.⁷⁸

Consequently, on the 26th of January, Gandhi was released, and during the course of the following few days, the members and ex-members of the Congress Working Committee were released also.

The release of Gandhi was, as was anything pertaining to Gandhi, a great front-page story of the American press. The news appeared in practically all the important dailies, but surprisingly, as on the occasion of the Dandi episode, it drew very little comment. Papers like the *Atlanta Constitution*, the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, the *Springfield Daily Republican* and the *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat*, had no comment to offer, though some of them did show a very lively interest in the news. In view of the fact that the Press had commented at length on the first Round Table Conference, deploring the non-participation of Mahatma Gandhi, the news of his release for the express purpose of enabling him to consider participation in the second R.T.C. evoked only a few comments. Those papers which did remark editorially, displayed a variety of opinion. The majority welcomed the release as a good omen for future relations ; some lauded it as a courageous act of statesmanship on the part of the British Government ; others considered it a necessary step after the London Conference, for they believed that without the cooperation of Gandhi and his party, it would be difficult to perfect

78. *India in 1930-31*, a statement prepared for presentation to Parliament by the Govt. of India, p. 103.

proclaim and operate the constitution. Some also saw in it a sign of some settlement between the British Government and the Indian National Congress and even the acceptance by Gandhi of the plan of government arrived at in the first R.T.C. Those who were rigidly conservative maintained that the release was evidence of a complete ineptitude on the part of the British Government to hold the situation in India, and anticipated confusion and chaos in the country. They believed that Gandhi at liberty was a greater menace to British rule than Gandhi in prison. In the editorial entitled "Gandhi Accepts Freedom," the *New York Herald Tribune* commented that in making his sudden offer of freedom to Gandhi and the other principal leaders of the Indian Nationalist group, Lord Irwin took a bold and resolute step, and that in accepting it, without conditions, Gandhi had given an indication that the step might succeed.

Lord Irwin, at all events, has manoeuvred to associate Mr. Gandhi once more in the great work of Indian government building. Mr. Gandhi has not at the outset rejected the manoeuvre. It is another optimistic sign.⁷⁹

The *Los Angeles Times* said :

Confidence of the British Government that the Indian conference in London will reach results acceptable to the majority of the Indian people is indicated by the release from jail of Mahatma Gandhi, leader of the Nationalist movement.⁸⁰

This paper thought that the release was likely to cause riots and bloodshed not necessarily brought about by the Nationalists. The mere presence of a big crowd, such as would certainly greet Gandhi on his release, was the sort of opportunity of

79. January 27, 1931.

80. January 27, 1931.

which communists loved to take advantage, and there was little doubt that India was as thoroughly permeated with Moscow-trained agitators as any other part of the world.

The Baltimore Sun wrote: "Gandhi is now out of jail because sitting physically helpless in a room under guard he was showing himself more powerful than all the brains and all the legions of Britain.⁸¹

The *New York Times* welcomed the release :

Freeing of Mahatma Gandhi and his chief lieutenants, with removal of the ban on the Indian National Congress, is not a retreat on the part of the British Government. The steps are necessary after the London round-table conference. The scheme of Indian home rule drafted by it must be ratified by the British people and the Indian people.⁸²

Considering the unconditional release of Gandhi a judicious act on the part of Lord Irwin, the *Christian Science Monitor* acclaimed the change in official policy :

The release of Gandhi and other Indian Congress Party leaders, announced from Delhi, is a courageous and commendable act of faith upon the part of the British authorities.⁸³

The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* commented pleasantly :

The British Government has done something so eminently sane that one wonders why it was not done before. Gandhi, Nationalist leader and apostle of civil disobedience, walks serenely forth from jail.⁸⁴

81. January 27, 1931.

82. January 27, 1931.

83. January 27, 1931.

84. *Ibid.*

It further remarked that keeping Gandhi in prison had been unwise, for at large, the Mahatma was a great influence in keeping his followers from any manifestation of violence. In jail his influence in this direction was less.

In the opinion of the *Kansas City Star*, the release of Gandhi once again directed attention to "this extraordinary leader of the rebellion against British authority in India." In its view, two factors had operated to keep the movement for Indian independence relatively bloodless. Both were persons—one, the little man who was worshipped by millions of his fellow countrymen, a mystic who preached the power of peace; the other, the cultured Englishman whose tact and moderation in a time of crisis had made him perhaps the greatest Viceroy India had ever had. In summing up, the *Star* struck a note which many can feel but none describe :

It is a remarkable tribute to Gandhi's influence that despite the failure of his methods so far to produce results in the way of forcing the British out of India, he is still the commanding figure among the Nationalists.⁸⁵

The *Philadelphia Inquirer* was among those who believed that the release of Gandhi would prove to be a menace to British rule. It remarked that in taking this action, Mr. MacDonald had burned all his bridges behind him and had given a dangerous agitation another chance to destroy every remnant of British rule in India. The statement of Lord Irwin (who, as the paper had always maintained, had shown throughout a singular weakness in dealing with violence) that the purpose of the release was to give the elements of disorder "full liberty of discussion," was another revelation of the complete ineptitude with which the whole situation had been handled, and

... these prisoners are not simply political; they

85. January 27, 1931.

have committed, or incited the commission of, serious crimes and disorders. Their object has been to make government impossible, and they have not hesitated to use assassination as a weapon. To set them free is in effect an assurance that they can continue their agitation with impunity.⁸⁶

The paper noted that the object of that general amnesty was to secure approval of the work of the London Conference, but felt Mr. MacDonald and Lord Irwin must be too optimistic if they fancied that the bitter animosity of years could be dissipated by a single magnificent gesture. In its view the agreement reached by the Conference went to the extreme limits of concession, and neither full Dominion status—still less independence—would be practicable for many years to come, for it maintained:

The control of foreign affairs, of defence and of finance must remain vested in the British Government. But Gandhi and his followers have given no indication that they will be satisfied with this. The Indian delegates at the Conference do not expect it of them. Will their agitation be checked by opening the jails? It is far more likely to be stimulated.⁸⁷

Paying tribute to Gandhi as "the most amazing figure of the age," and commenting on his release, the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* said, "The Associated Press reports that he and Viceroy Lord Irwin have agreed on formulas for settlement of all points in dispute."⁸⁸

The New Republic differed from the consensus of opinion of the daily press, and considered the release simply an act of expediency.

86. *Ibid.*

87. *Ibid.*

88. March 5, 1931.

... Unless the tentative agreement reached by the Round Table Conference in London is accepted by the Gandhi group, the present deadlock must continue; and the Gandhists could hardly arrive at a decision while their leaders were locked up and prevented from conferring.⁸⁹

The Nation was of the opinion that the release, with the concurrent termination of the Government order under which the Working Committee of the Congress Party had been an outlaw organization, would make fluid—at least temporarily—a situation that threatened to harden into deadlock.

It is hard to see how the Working Committee, in the light of past pronouncements, can consistently accept the Round Table recommendations as they stand without convincing assurance that self-government promised therein shall be real and the reservations shall not be merely a device for preserving British dominance.⁹⁰

The release of Gandhi and the members of the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress was indication of a pacific approach by the Government. It did not bring about a suspension of civil disobedience. The movement did tone down, as there was much talk of settlement with the Government, and the authorities continued their repressive policy. On his release, Gandhi had announced that he had come out of jail with an open mind and was prepared to study the whole situation from every point of view. From the 8th to the 14th February, prolonged discussions took place between him and the Moderate leaders just returned from the London Conference, and on the latter date, the Working Committee authorized Gandhi to seek an interview with the Viceroy. Thereupon Gandhi sought

89. February 4, 1931, 309.

90. *Ibid.*

an interview with the Viceroy for a talk "as man to man," and this was promptly granted.

On various dates between the 17th of February and the 5th of March, Gandhi had private interviews with Lord Irwin (later Lord Halifax) and there was eager speculation amongst the public concerning the basis upon which the conversations were proceeding and the extent to which the Government would be prepared to accede to the demands of the Congress. Meanwhile, reaction throughout the country to the release of the Congress leaders had been one of triumph for the Nationalist cause.

The Gandhi-Irwin negotiations evoked no interest in the American press. The daily papers refrained from making any comment, and only a few observations were made by the periodicals. On the decision of the Congress Working Committee to continue with the movement, the *Commonweal* feared that the apostle of non-resistance might let loose upon India, with highly perilous consequences for the rest of the world, a torrent of revolution that would pass from the plane of pacifism to that of anarchical bloodshed and destruction, for it believed :

Absolute pacifism may be as dangerous as militarism, being the other extreme of a falacy. If ever a middle path—that of reasonable compromise—were needed, it is in India today.⁹¹

The *Outlook and Independent* felt: "Hopes for peace in India neither brightened nor disappeared in the week after Mahatma Gandhi was released from jail."⁹² In deciding to carry on with the civil disobedience campaign, it believed that Gandhi merely was saving a trump card for use in the forthcoming Round Table Conference.

91. February 11, 1931, 395.

92. February 1931, 209.

The *New Republic* is a somewhat pessimistic strain, wrote:

The situation in India is dark, but not entirely black, as regards the prospect for a peaceful settlement. . . . If the negotiations break down and affairs in India get worse, they (the British) will be quite as much to blame as the Indians.⁹³

But the *Christian Century* was optimistic. Considering the Gandhi-Irwin talks "a most historic meeting," it remarked, "If the conference succeeds, a new day will have dawned in international state craft."⁹⁴

As the Gandhi-Irwin talks dragged on with no sign of a settlement even after two weeks, it feared:

. . . If Lord Irwin and Gandhi cannot agree, and the nationalist leaders go back to jail, the initiative in the Indian Congress movement is almost certain to pass into the hands of younger firebrands and out of that will come widespread violence.⁹⁵

The *World Tomorrow* did not feel hopeful of a settlement:

Peace may be brought much nearer as a result of the Conference between Gandhi and Lord Irwin . . . Our prediction, however, is that no satisfactory agreement will be reached.⁹⁶

Even so it drew a picture of the consequences if it failed, for it believed that the Nationalists would continue their struggle until Britain granted them a new status—that of equality, and was of the opinion that if Britain were wise in time, India might

93. February 1931, 1.

94. February 1931, 259.

95. March 1931, 331.

96. March 1931, 67.

be saved as a Dominion ; if not, India would insist upon separation and would go her perilous way alone, for “ . . . the tide is moving irresistably towards freedom for India.”⁹⁷

Generally the consensus of opinion in the American press on the Gandhi-Irwin negotiations, as indicated by the few periodicals which gave it thought, was not very hopeful of settlement, and the course of the negotiations seemed to prove their misgivings were not groundless. Many a time the talks were near breaking point. Among other demands, Gandhi insisted on an inquiry into police excesses and the right to picket shops selling British goods, in addition to general amnesty of political prisoners, repeal of ordinances, restitution of confiscated property and reinstatement of all officials and servants who had resigned during the course of the movement or who were removed by the Government. However, on the 4th of March, 1931, despite the grave doubts that had been entertained as to its possibility, an agreement was reached, known as the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. The Government agreed to Gandhi's conditions in varying degrees, and on the 5th of March the terms were published. The settlement was considered a victory for both parties, though some leaders of the Congress did not view it kindly.

The settlement in India was the biggest story of the day for the American press and was almost universally acclaimed as good news. All the important dailies gave it prominent space on their front pages. Simultaneously with the publication of the terms of the settlement, almost all the important newspapers commented editorially. The periodicals, too, did not lag behind in expressing their views, and the number of comments made was appreciably more than ever before.

Most of the papers which had been critical of the Indian national movement and of Gandhi, changed the tone of their editorials from uncertainty, chaos and confusion to hope for the future of the Indian people. They now believed that the concord entered into between Gandhi and Lord Irwin would be

97. *Ibid.*, April 1931, 102.

a great relief to the ministry and people of Britain. The majority of the papers were profuse in their praise of both Gandhi and Lord Irwin. Some gave credit to the Viceroy entirely for bringing peace to chaotic India, thus assuring him an honoured place in history. Some, particularly those with pro-British leanings, considered it a victory for the Government, for the Government had only conceded the right of manufacturing salt to a few people living on the seashore, which did not amount to much. Some papers considered that the settlement was a feather in the cap of Lord Irwin since it went to disprove the contention of the die-hard opposition in England which had always maintained that compromise was impossible with the orientals, that concessions would never be interpreted as anything save a sign of weakness and that only the strong hand would save India. It was the Conservative opinion in Britain (often vociferously voiced by Winston Churchill) that there was something humiliating in the spectacle of a representative of the British Empire carrying on negotiations in a Government House with the "half-naked fanatic" who was oftentimes placed in the category of a criminal by more ardent imperialists. On the other hand, many welcomed the agreement and complimented the Viceroy, for it was believed on all sides that they would stop bloodshed and lead to progress in India.

The section of the press which was not biased one way or the other by any feelings for India or Britain, and also the liberal section which had always sympathised with people under subjection, hailed Gandhi as the hero of the drama. They saw in the settlement a victory for passive resistance the like of which history had never before witnessed. Warm tributes were paid to the personality of the Mahatma, and, he was hailed as a practical statesman, equally at home in the domains of religion and of politics.

Although the press devoted much space to lauding Gandhi and Irwin, the comments lacked any reference to the terms of the settlement. In certain quarters traces of opinion could be discerned dilating on the efficacy of the settlement. Briefly, it conveyed that the settlement made possible the carrying forward

of the work of the Round Table Conference and that the major difficulties affecting India's future would be minimised. Opinions were also expressed that the concord was only a preliminary to the ultimate solution of the Indian problem.

Among the numerous comments made by the U.S. press on the Gandhi-Irwin agreement, the *Atlanta Constitution* remarked :

It would be greatly to his [Irwin's] honour as a representative of the Imperial throne to have reached an understanding with that strange and potential apostle of Indian aspirations, Mahatma Gandhi, whereby a peace is maintained in India and millions of people of both Great Britain and India saved from the slaughters, wants and ruin of an unnecessary war-conflagration.⁹⁸

Under the heading "Good News From India," the *Christian Science Monitor* observed :

... the agreement means that the chief political organization among Indians has for the first time shown that it sees in the Round Table scheme the promise of a genuine road toward that Independence to which India looks forward.⁹⁹

The *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat* said, "The compromise reached Tuesday, none too soon, and called an armistice compact, is the longest step yet taken for transforming Old India into New India."¹⁰⁰ Passive resistance would hardly have won if the British Government had not been anxious to solve the problem on terms satisfactory to India.

The *Baltimore Sun* was of the opinion that in view of the vilification of the negotiations by Winston Churchill, the success

98. March 5, 1931.

99. *Ibid.*

100. *Ibid.*

of the Gandhi-Irwin talks "makes the die-hards on both sides look a little silly.¹⁰¹ Whatever came in the future, that spectacle at least provided a heartening exhibition of human nature (so often cited to support hopelessness) enlightened by intelligence, patriotism and a sense of responsibility for forces only dimly perceived, the paper added.

Under the heading "Mahatma Magic," the *Los Angeles Times* remarked that through the magic of his exalted idealism, Mahatma Gandhi had humbled the pride of the matter-of-fact Briton, and closed the editorial thus :

There was a certain King Pyrrhus whose defeat of the Romans has become historic. It looks as though Mahatma Gandhi has done even better than Pyrrhus.¹⁰²

Paying tribute to Gandhi and his doctrine of non-violence, the *Kansas City Star* drew a picture of the Mahatma in the hour of his victory, no doubt in good humour :

In his hour of triumph the mahatma sipped hot goat milk from a battered can. Although the report does not so state, it is safe to assume that he was dressed as usual in a loin cloth and that his spinning wheel was not far off.¹⁰³

Of the periodicals which commented on the Gandhi-Irwin Pact a few are quoted below.

The Nation, which always had taken a lively interest in Indian affairs, remarked :

The agreement between Lord Irwin and Mr. Gandhi, which brings at least a temporary peace to India after a year of intense and bitter strife, seems to us to

101. *Ibid.*

102. March 6, 1931.

103. March 10, 1931.

constitute a firm beginning towards a solution of the British-Indian dilemma.¹⁰⁴

The *Christian Century*, which greatly lauded Gandhi's piety and saintliness, believed that in view of the agreement, India would achieve independence without drawing the sword. Gandhi had proved to doubting generations that the Sermon on the Mount was no idle dream. It almost sang a hymn of praise to the spirit of truth :

... What words are adequate to pay tribute to the victory which he has won ? It has been the strangest, yet the most marvelous victory in modern history. It has been not a victory of Indian nationalism over British imperialism, but of spiritual compulsion over the pretensions of materialism. It has been as much a victory over the soul of India as over the might of Britain. And it has been a victory which puts a new face on the world's hope for international peace. For Gandhi has proved that the re-dressing of the political and racial balances, which is bound to come between Asia and Africa and the west, need not involve the resort to force.¹⁰⁵

The periodical also had a kind word to say for the efforts of Lord Irwin, and said, a few weeks later, "In these negotiations Lord Irwin has come out with his already good reputation for love of truth and fair play greatly enhanced."¹⁰⁶

Considering the news of the Pact "almost unbelievably encouraging," the *World Tomorrow* paid tribute to both the Viceroy and the Mahatma. In its editorial entitled "Everybody Wins," it said :

... Lord Irwin has won a notable victory. Even

104. March 18, 1931, 289.

105. March 18, 1931, 367.

106. *Ibid.* (April 15, 1931), 525.

greater is the triumph of Mahatma Gandhi. The deadlock has been broken, and a pacific settlement of the problem of India's status now seems possible.¹⁰⁷

While the settlement was considered 'good news by practically the entire press, there was also a considerable section which considered it only one step—an important step—towards the solution of the complicated Indian problem. It was believed on all sides that no successful solution of India's future could be devised without the cooperation of Indian National Congress. The importance of the Pact lay in the fact that it brought the possibility of a solution of the basic question within the domain of reality. The *Springfield Republican* meant this when it remarked :

Much hard work remains to be done before a solution of the Indian problem can be found, but the truce agreed to by Mahatma Gandhi and the Viceroy at least gives this needful work a chance to go on.¹⁰⁸

The *New York Herald Tribune*, also sharing the views of those who believed that the agreement could lead to progress, considered the Pact a remarkable triumph of statesmanship for Irwin and the MacDonald Government and for Gandhi and other Nationalist leaders. Although it thought that with the truce the Indian National Congress was associated in the orderly constitutional development in India while an atmosphere of peace was assured for discussions over what the constitution should be, it was not optimistic as to future eventualities. "There seems to be no assurance as yet that the negotiations will succeed; and the truce seems to represent more of a compromise than a victory."¹⁰⁹

107. April 1931, 101.

108. March 5, 1931.

109. March 5, 1931.

The *New York Times*, one of those which believed that in the Pact the British Government had the better of the argument, wrote, "In the Gandhi-Irwin Pact it is Great Britain that seems to have conceded the least and won the most."¹¹⁰ What the British Government could really claim as "victory" was Gandhi's consent to enter a round-table conference.

The *New Republic* was of almost the same opinion as the *Herald Tribune*. The provisional settlement between Gandhi and the Viceroy was not so important as dispatches from London would have people believe, it maintained

... Partly for diplomatic reasons, but mainly, no doubt, as an example of wishful thinking, the British represent the case as being closer to complete agreement than it is in fact. Yet undoubtedly a tremendous forward step has been taken, and there is today more hope of a peaceful, satisfactory settlement than has ever before existed.¹¹¹

It could be noticed, however, that there was also a very small minority of opinion which differed from the general trend and whose anti-Indian attitude prompted it to view the situation through the eyes of the British die-hards. It was the opinion of this section that Lord Irwin had made the situation in India more difficult by temporizing with treason, and that the settlement lowered British prestige in the eyes of the world. To quote an example, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* asserted :

By signing a "truce" with Gandhi, the Viceroy of India, no doubt unwittingly, has done much to impair British prestige. Treating with rebellion against constituted authority is always a dubious experiment. In this instance Lord Irwin approached the chief of the rebels as if he were the representative of an indepen-

110. March 6, 1931.

111. March 18, 1931, 113.

dent power, though the Congress Party had deliberately abstained from the London Conference and took no part in the approach to a settlement there reached. The terms of this agreement are really of less consequence than the fact that it has been reached in this backstairs fashion.¹¹²

The reaction to the Gandhi-Irwin Pact in Britain was mixed. The *World Tomorrow* wrote :

The Daily Mail complains of the mischief done through "the sentimental weakness of Lord Irwin" in consenting to "prolonged and humiliating confabulations with Gandhi, that convicted criminal and avowed enemy of the British Empire." When an announcement of the truce was made in the House of Commons there were prolonged cheers from Laborites and Liberals, but "from the Conservative benches, however, there was nothing but stony silence. . . . Mr. Baldwin fidgeted in his chair, passed his hand over his face and kept his lips shut. Sir Austen Chamberlain, next to him sat impassively with his top hat pulled down over his eyes and his feet on the clerk's table."¹¹³

112. March 5, 1931.

113. April 1931, 102.

The Second Round Table Conference and After

With the release of Gandhi, the period of strife and struggle was, no doubt, over, and arms had been laid down, but there was no peace in sight. There was still tension in certain parts of the country. It was true that some civil disobedience prisoners were discharged in accordance with the agreement, but thousands of politicals who were technically not "civil disobedience" prisoners remained behind bars. The agreement was reached at the top level. The Civil Service hierarchy had not approved of the Pact; they saw in it a triumph for the Congress and added prestige for Gandhi by dealing with him on equal terms. Whatever the reason, they stiffened their backs and tightened their hold. Matters came to such a pass that Gandhi was forced to declare his inability to participate in the London discussion. The situation was straightened out at the last minute, however, and the Mahatma sailed for England from Bombay on the 29th of August, 1931, to participate in the second Round Table Conference.

Gandhi was the sole delegate authorized by the Indian National Congress. He kept to his simple ways of life throughout the journey and during the stay in London. The American press took special delight in contrasting him with the other delegates—especially with the Princes—and commented at

length on his odd appearance and outfit, never forgetting to mention his two goats which added colour to the description. Some of the papers stretched their imagination a bit too far and wrote things about the Mahatma quite out of tune with reality. As an example, the *Baltimore Sun* printed the following headlines over a news item referring to the voyage :

GANDHI SPURNS CABIN ON LINER
SLEEPS ON BENCH WITH CAT
BATHES IN \$5,000 SUPPLY OF WATER FROM
SACRED GANGES, WHILE COMPANIONS MOLD
BRAHMIN GODS FROM MUD¹

Gandhi reached England on the 12th of September and was warmly received by the English crowds. Many were attracted to him for his saintliness and many came to see him out of curiosity for his odd appearance. But, on the whole, the people were friendly in spite of the fact that Gandhi had given a severe blow to British economy. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* remarked that "some people in the crowd laughed at him but Gandhi took it seriously."²

At the first Round Table Conference, the Indian Princes had attracted the most attention, people being dazzled by their diamonds and colourful turbans. At the second Conference it was Gandhi who was the centre of interest. The *Baltimore Sun* aptly commented, "So far Gandhi is the centre of the Conference; indeed, he is likely to remain the centre of it."³ The *Nation* said coittily :

When before has the world seen a spectacle comparable to Mahatma Gandhi in St. James's Palace? Here is one naked little man, physically a ridiculous figure, negotiating with the British Empire.⁴

-
1. September 4, 1931.
 2. September 14, 1931.
 3. September 15, 1931.
 4. September 30, 1931, 323.

H. N. Brailsford voiced the sentiments of many when he wrote in *The New Republic* that the Princes were indeed there once more, magnificent as ever, and with them were clever lawyers. There were also spokesmen of high finance and Mohammadan leaders, but it was no longer on them that the eyes of people were bent. Brailsford who was a sincere admirer of the ascetic leader and knew him well added :

He (Mahatma Gandhi) holds our fate in his hands. With all his gentleness and courtesy, he is capable of smashing with a remorseless rejection all the schemes which titled but unrepresentative persons are working out in the courtly chambers of St. James's Palace. He knows what he means to obtain; and if the hope of getting it should vanish, he will pack up his spinning wheel and return to India. With a word he can bring about the resumption of civil disobedience. Trade will stand still and taxes will cease to flow into the exchequer. And how, one asks, with the pound trembling, would that end? This little man may bring an empire down.⁵

Gandhi created a great impression with his opening speech at the Conference. Until then the press had little to go on except to expatiate upon the oddity of his appearance in a meagre costume, better suited to the tropics than to the chilly English climate, and the eccentricity of his ascetic diet. In his speech, Gandhi said, among other things:

There was a time when I was proud of being called a British subject. Now I would far rather be called a rebel than a subject. But I have aspired and still aspire to be a citizen, not in the empire but in a commonwealth—a partnership if God wills it, indissoluble, but not a partnership imposed by one nation on another.⁶

5. October 21, 1931, 250.

6. *The New York Times*, September 20, 1931.

Gandhi's first address at the Conference evoked few comments from the American press. The impression created on the *Baltimore Sun* was:

... The whole burden of his speech was "sweet reasonableness." He was humble—he did not wish to obstruct the Government. . . . he was conciliatory—he bore down on the "spirit of cooperation"; he was realistic. . . .⁷

Burdened with a great responsibility, the paper added, Gandhi had opened the conference with a personal victory of such magnitude that the British spokesmen would find it extremely hard to forget or overlook in subsequent sessions.

The *Springfield Daily Republican* testified:

Neither in words nor in tone was there the slightest trace of rancor such as might be expected from a rebel who has more than once been in jail. His purpose is unfaltering, but it is based not on hatred but on love.⁸

Ferdinand Kuhn, Jr., in a dispatch to his paper brought into relief another facet of the "naked faqir":

Saint and social reformer, politician and propagandist, he has now shown himself to be a diplomat with one of the subtlest minds that ever came out of the East.⁹

The *Philadelphia Inquirer*, on the other hand, came out with some critical remarks on the statement. It wrote, "With all his assumption of humility, there is a note of arrogance in his utterances. . . . He has no authority to speak for all India."¹⁰

7. September 17, 1931.

8. September 17, 1931.

9. *The New York Times*, September 20, 1931.

10. September 14, 1931.

Throughout Gandhi's stay in London, this paper commented on the conference and Gandhi's statements in the same terms as did the English die-hards. It believed that Gandhi "has come to confer as an irreconcilable and everything he says must be interpreted in the light of this fact."¹¹ With such presumptions, it is not difficult to understand the paper's approach. Its entire attitude toward the position of the Indian nationalists, as depicted by Gandhi before the Round Table from time to time, was coloured by its own prejudice. Gandhi's statement in one of his speeches at the Conference, that India could be a valuable partner of Britain if not held by force, was characterized by the Philadelphia journal as merely "rhetorical window dressing."¹² The paper also emphasized that Gandhi spoke for the ruling castes, that the Congress Party was revolutionary in character and that if his demands were not acceded to by Britain he would let loose violence in India. When Gandhi stated that rather than accept the husk of independence he would declare himself a rebel, the paper considered it a challenge to the Government which, it emphasized, no Government could hesitate to meet. "It would be better to have the Round Table Conference fail utterly than to yield to such a preposterous threat."¹³

The *Christian Science Monitor*, whose opinions in the past had always corresponded with those of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, changed its usual critical tone. In the statements of Mahatma Gandhi, particularly the one in which he said that he would rather be a citizen of a Commonwealth than of the Empire, the paper discerned signs of conciliation between the British Government's viewpoint and that of the Congress, and observed:

On broad lines his critics will find little in his speech to grumble at; it is when he claims to be represen-

11. *Ibid.*, September 18, 1931.

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Ibid.*, September 25, 1931.

tative of the peasant that Mr. Gandhi is treading on dangerous political grounds.¹⁴

The *Los Angeles Times* adopted the same attitude as the *Monitor*. The future India as Gandhi visualized it in his speech was "a theoretical impossibility, at least as a basis for discussion. It is not too far from the federation scheme proposed by the Simon Commission to rule out all likelihood of compromise, and since Gandhi specifically declares he is willing to talk compromise, the round-table discussion seems likely to get somewhere—at least so far as Gandhi and his following are concerned."¹⁵ In the paper's opinion, if the Conference broke it would be from another direction; the Princes, who would be apt to find their prerogatives infringed rather more in a Dominion of India than under direct control of the British Parliament, might not be satisfied with such a plan.

The *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat*, however, felt that "it is likely . . . that this little man will be an obstacle exceedingly hard to overcome."¹⁶

Barring a few, the American press as a whole refrained from commenting on the proceedings of the conference. There was nothing of a dramatic nature in the deliberations, and enough had already been written on every aspect of Gandhi's odd appearance and strange ascetic ways. The mutual squabbles of the delegates, behind-the-scene manoeuvres and the petty details of the proposed constitution were not likely to arouse much interest in America.

It is noteworthy that the U.S. press did not indulge in any speculation on the outcome of this conference as it did in the case of the first. To a discerning eye, however, it was not difficult to see that the second conference was not going to succeed. As a matter of fact, very few Indian Nationalist leaders had any illusions about it. The gulf between the viewpoints of the

14. September 17, 1931.

15. September 19, 1931.

16. September 15, 1931.

Congress and the British Government was immense, and it seemed very unlikely that the differences could be bridged at that stage. Besides, the issues under consideration were of a nature which precluded the possibility of any compromise between the two conflicting viewpoints. The first Conference had already drawn up the framework of the constitution; what remained was to discuss the details. Gandhi did not go all the way to London to talk interminably about the petty details of the constitution. The real question on which he insisted was independence. The British Government, however, had no intention of falling in line with his point of view in this respect. Apparently its aim was a scheme for Indians to share power with the bureaucracy.

Besides, nothing substantial could be expected from the august assembly considering its composition. The membership now was more or less the same as in the first. The delegates represented interests and communities rather than the people at large. They were chosen by the Viceroy and his officials, cataloguing with scrupulous care every creed, every party, every racial minority and every interest in the country. From the ranks of the peasantry, however, not a single one or any spokesman for them had a seat at the Conference table, barring Gandhi, who, however, could not be named as such. Under the circumstances, it was easy for the Government to manoeuvre the proceedings. Shri Jawaharlal Nehru wrote :

It was fitting that in this assembly of vested interests—imperialist, feudal, financial, industrial, religious, communal—the leadership of the British Indian delegation should usually fall to the Aga Khan, who in his own person happened to combine all these interests in some degree. Closely associated as he has been with British imperialism and the British ruling class for over a generation, he could thoroughly appreciate and represent our rulers' interests and viewpoint. He was an able representative of Imperialist

England at the Round Table Conference. The irony of it was that he was supposed to represent India.¹⁷

It is therefore not surprising to find the demand of His Highness the Aga Khan to be made a ruling Prince of some territory in India as a reward for his services at the Round Table Conference.

It is thus apparent that the scales were heavily loaded against the viewpoint represented by the Indian National Congress. There were countless speeches made, meetings held, organizations formed and expanded with reactionary elements both of India and Britain progressively hardening their uncompromising attitude. The question which assumed the greatest importance was the communal question. The British Government, with the concurrence of Dr. Ambedkar, the leader of the Untouchables, wanted to classify the Untouchables separately like the Muslims and Christians. Gandhi, however, would not be a party to the dismemberment of the Hindu community. The carving out of a separate community would have had a disastrous effect not only on the Hindus but on Indian polity at large. There were already too many communities standing in the way of Indian progress, and Gandhi threatened to stand against this sinister move even at the cost of his life. As a matter of fact, it did nearly cost him his life when he made his "fast unto death" in protest.

The Round Table Conference concluded its sessions on December 1, 1931. It must be remembered that the American press gave little consideration to the proceedings of the conference, but on its termination practically all the important papers commented aditorially. The majority of the press considered the conference a failure. The pro-British papers blamed Gandhi, while the liberal section held the British responsible. Those with independent views apportioned the blame to both, and some realized the inherent difficulties

17. *Toward Freedom* (New York: The John Day Company, 1942), p. 208.

standing in the way of a successful conclusion and gave various explanations. The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* belonged in the last category and made an unbiased appraisal. It considered that Gandhi's visit had been relatively fruitless and observed that the conference had continued long after it was quite apparent that it was getting nowhere. In the paper's opinion, it might have achieved more if British home politics had not combined with Indian jealousies to create a stalemate. It added:

The eclipse of Labor in the recent election killed any lingering hope that Gandhi would get any approximation of the self-rule he demands for India. With a British Government, Tory in fact if not in name, reform in India is likely to be pushed backward.¹⁸

Under the heading "Gandhi Loses," the *Atlanta Constitution* remarked:

So far as the accomplishment of any material progress towards smoothing over conditions in disturbed India is concerned, the conference, with its three months of sessions and million-dollar expenses, accomplished little or nothing.¹⁹

The *Kansas City Star* wrote, "... like the first, the second Round Table Conference has failed . . .".²⁰ But in this paper's opinion, the round table had made considerable progress in drafting a constitution.

The *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat* wrote that the conference came to an end "with no definite solution of the problem yet in sight."²¹ It also remarked that such independence as Gandhi demanded was utterly impractical and nothing could be worse for the people of India than to give them uncontrolled liberty.

18. December 1, 1931.

19. December 3, 1931.

20. December 2, 1931.

21. December 2, 1931.

The *Philadelphia Inquirer* represented that minority view which considered the conference a failure but put the entire blame on Gandhi. It wrote Gandhi "... has been from the first the chief obstacle to any amicable arrangement with the British Government.... The second conference, like the first, has gone on the rocks in consequence."²² Blaming Gandhi, the paper further remarked that as a Hindu he had no regard for the welfare of the many millions who were not of his caste, and concluded, "He might well be called the evil genius of India."²³ In an editorial a few days later, the *Inquirer* reiterated its contention that the conference "has failed to accomplish anything.... Gandhi, who more than any other one man, is responsible for the failure,..."²⁴

Although the majority of opinion in the U.S.A. considered the conference a failure, a few could still credit it with some achievements. The *New York Herald Tribune* observed: "But between this and total failure there is a wide gap; the real question is how far the way may be kept open for further progress."²⁵ Although Britain was willing to make generous concessions step by step, the basic issue—where final power in India was to lie—was not solved. The conference, it believed, had only postponed the issue, and for this both the radical Indian Nationalists and the British Tories were to be blamed.

The *Christian Science Monitor* was also among those who refused to consider the conference a failure. Mr. MacDonald's declaration that the Nationalist Government intended to implement to the full the pledges given to India by the Labour Government was, in the opinion of the paper, "in itself... a great stride forward,"²⁶ and was bound to have favourable reactions in India, at any rate among the Moderates, as well as elsewhere throughout the world. The paper highlighted two points:

22. December 1, 1931.

23. *Ibid.*

24. December 3, 1931.

25. December 1, 1931.

26. December 3, 1931.

The conference has recorded two very important achievements. It has shown that a plan for creating a federated India from British India and the native States is practicable, and it has strengthened the growing faith of Indians in British statesmanship.²⁷

In the opinion of the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, the second effort to work out a constitutional system for India had broken down chiefly because of the inability of the Hindus and the Muslims to agree upon a plan of representation. But considering the immensity of the task—the population of 300 million people with varied geographic and economic conditions and composed of many races, religious convictions and cultures—the paper felt that it was an impossible venture in any case, except through long evolution. It believed that the British had gained a definite advantage out of the deliberations:

The round tables have been more advantageous, it would seem, to the imperial interest than to that of Indian independence, since they have advertised the internal conflicts and postponed substantial concessions, have encouraged moderate opinion in India, and, by giving Mr. MacDonald the opportunity to put responsibility for the breakup of the conference upon the Moslem-Hindu impasse, will react favorably in foreign opinion upon British policy.²⁸

The impression created on the *Springfield Daily Republican* was that the second round table, like the first, was but a phase in a continuing process, and it felt that the task of creating a satisfactory constitution for a country of 320,000,000 people and an infinitely complicated social order involved a prodigious amount of detailed study, and that so long as the work was pressed with energy and goodwill, there should be no complaint if progress at times seemed slow. In conclusion, the paper said :

27. *Ibid.*

28. December 3, 1931.

The London Round Tables have been helpful both to India and to the British people, who have come to understand much better both the difficulty of the problem and the pressing need of solving it.²⁹

The *New York Times*, on the other hand, observed :

Adjournment of the second round table conference without drafting a new constitution for India, might be called a failure if the lack of agreement had been between Great Britain and India. But the deadlock at the London conference was between Indians and Indians.³⁰

The liberal opinion was voiced by *The Nation* :

Only a British right-about-face could apparently have rescued the Round Table Conference from the abyss toward which it drifted in its closing weeks. But instead of frank generosity on the part of the British Government, which might have stilled the conviction of futility growing in the minds of the Indian delegates, the discussions merely reveal that India's major demands are to be ignored.³¹

After a strenuous time in England, Gandhi set sail for India and landed in Bombay on the 28th of December, 1931. If Jawaharlal Nehru could be considered to voice the sentiments of the Indian Nationalists, the conference, in their opinion, was a complete failure, for he wrote :

We saw the pitiful and absurdly inadequate attempts to scratch the surface of national and economic problems, the pacts and intrigues and manoeuvres, the joining of

29. December 3, 1931.

30. December 6, 1931.

31. December 9, 1931, 629.

hands of some of our own countrymen with the most reactionary elements of the British Conservative party, the endless talk over petty issues, the deliberate shelving of all that really mattered, the continuous playing into the hands of the big vested interests and especially British imperialism, the mutual squabbles, varied by feastings and mutual admiration. It was all jobbery—big jobs, little jobs, jobs and seats for the Hindus, for the Moslems, for the Sikhs, for the Anglo-Indians, for the Europeans; but all jobs for the upper classes—the masses had no look-in. Opportunism was rampant, and different groups seemed to prowl about like hungry wolves waiting for their prey—the spoils under the new constitution. No one thought in terms of independence, of real freedom, of a transfer of power to a democratic India, of the solution of any of the vital and urgent economic problems facing the Indian people.³²

Before the centre of interest shifted from India to London, there were an appreciable number of comments made in the American press about the Civil Disobedience Movement and its various aspects. While R.T. Conference was in session, hardly any comments were made about the situation in India, and in fact no significant developments had taken place there. On the other hand, the London gathering was very significant, if not from the point of view of the Indian Nationalist, at least for its news value. The representatives of East and West had gathered for the first time in the Empire's capital to frame a constitution for over three hundred million people. Considerable propaganda had already been made to the effect that the Indians would take another significant step towards their goal of self-government. No wonder the conference attracted the close attention of the American press.

All through the duration of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, the political fire in India was smouldering. Many prominent leaders

32. Nehru, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

were in jail, and repression in different Provinces was carried on as before.

On his return from England, Gandhi sought an interview with the Viceroy ; this was refused, whereupon the Working Committee of the Congress resolved to resume the Civil Disobedience Movement. On January 4, 1932, Gandhi was arrested along with other leaders, and the Viceroy promulgated a few more ordinances to suppress the movement. The Congress had been declared illegal, and along with it all manner of allied or sympathetic organizations such as Peasant Unions, Youth Leagues, Student Associations, etc.

The 1932 methods were different, and the Government began with an offensive all along the line. Every conceivable power was given and taken under a batch of all-India and provincial ordinances ; organizations were outlawed ; buildings, property, automobiles, bank accounts, were seized ; public gatherings and processions forbidden ; and newspapers and printing presses fully controlled.³³

Thus wrote Jawaharlal Nehru, describing the Government repression. This time the Government did not resort to mass arrests, but picked up only the leaders and active political workers.

The news of the resumption of the Civil Disobedience Movement and the arrest of Gandhi did not come as a surprise to the American press. It was a foregone conclusion, after the failure of the London Conference. The pro-British Press justified the steps taken by the Government in putting down sedition and terrorism, while the liberal section condemned the Government's action. The majority Press did not view with favour the resumption of the Civil Disobedience Movement ; they gave the campaign little hope for success, for they considered that it was started under less

33. Nehru, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

favourable auspices for the Nationalist cause than the struggle which began with the salt-making expedition to the sea two years previously. Some papers considered that in resorting to civil disobedience after the most solemn pledges by all the British parties of ultimate Dominion rule for India, Gandhi had a slighter claim on the sympathies of the outside world than when he began his campaign against the limited measures of self-government contemplated in the Simon Report. It was also hinted by some that the state of affairs in England was far less favourable to the Nationalists, if it came to a test of strength, than it had been before the general election.

On March 11, 1932, when the movement was at its height, Gandhi wrote a letter to the Secretary of State for India, conveying his decision to "fast unto death", in case the British Government decided to carve out separate electorates for the Untouchables. Among other things, he wrote :

It may be my judgement is warped and that I am wholly in error in regarding separate electorates for the depressed classes as harmful to them or to Hinduism. If so, I am not likely to be in the right with reference to the other parts of my philosophy of life. In that case, my death by fasting will be at once a penance for my error and a lifting of a weight from [those numberless men and women who have a child-like faith in my wisdom].³⁴

Thus on the 17th of August, 1932, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald announced the decision of His Majesty's Government to give separate electorates to the Untouchables. Thereupon Gandhi started his fast, on September 20th. The whole country was stunned by the news. Prayer meetings were held and a feverish attempt was made to convene a Leaders Conference to come to some understanding on the question and thus save the life of the Mahatma. A settlement was finally arrived at between the

34. Quoted in the *New York Times*, September 13, 1932.

Hindu and Untouchable leaders and was known as the Poona Pact. The agreement was accepted by the British Government on the 26th of September, and on the same day Gandhi broke his fast after prayer and the singing of religious hymns.

The American press was greatly concerned by the news of Gandhi's "fast unto death," and it appeared on the front pages of practically all the important papers. Gandhi's every-day activities were described in scrupulous detail, and though it was difficult for Americans to fully appreciate the method employed by the Mahatma to achieve his objective—political in nature—still the general opinion was very sympathetic. The *New York Times*, which represented this view, wrote:

Gandhi's position in the matter is easy to understand and to sympathize with. Yet there can never be a self-governing India if divisions among her people are multiplied.³⁵

Several days later, the same paper remarked in an editorial that the fast, though ostensibly directed against the British Government, was really an appeal to the conscience of his own countrymen, both high-caste and low-caste, and that Great Britain had imposed a settlement only because the people of India could not get together among themselves. Appreciating Gandhi's point of view, the *New York Times* remarked:

It is certainly for the best interests of the Indian people that the great Hindu constituency should not develop a new group cleavage in a country afflicted with too many factions and separate interests.³⁶

Liberal opinion was very apprehensive about the fast. Its sentiments were voiced by *The Nation*, which said:

35. September 19, 1932.

36. *Ibid.*, September 25, 1932.

The death of Gandhi by self-starvation would not only mean the loss to the world of one of its most significant figures. It would let loose in India a storm which the British already foresee. It is to be hoped that the government and Gandhi will somehow find a compromise.³⁷

The unsympathetic opinion, as voiced by the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, failed to see the significance of the fast. The paper commented:

To the unsympathetic eye the Mahatma seems to be making merely a grandstand play His grievance is that the untouchables are to have some share in the future government of India which to a high caste Hindu like himself is well high unthinkable. In other words, the apostle of liberty for India would keep millions of his countrymen in hopeless subjection. If any consciences are shaken it should be those of Gandhi and his supporters.³⁸

Gandhi's fast drew wide-spread response in India for the abolition of Untouchability, but it had an adverse effect on the Civil Disobedience movement.

The country's attention had been directed to other issues and many Congress workers had turned to the "Harijan" (Untouchable) cause. Probably most of the people wanted an excuse to revert to safer activities which did not involve the risk of jail going or worse still "lathi" blows and confiscation of property.³⁹

On the 8th of May, 1933, Gandhi began another fast for twenty-one days for "a heart prayer for purification of myself"

37. September 28, 1932, 267.

38. September 23, 1932.

39. Nehru, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

and my associates for greater vigilance and watchfulness in connection with the Harijan cause.''⁴⁰ Gandhi was released from jail and the movement was suspended; all who were able and willing, however, were advised to offer individual civil disobedience. Suspension of mass civil disobedience gave a final blow to the movement.

To the average westerner, Gandhi's three-week fast for purification was bewildering. It was hard for him to understand why the Mahatma should resort to a course which might result in his death. There could be detected in the opinions of some a note of impatience with the methods used by the holy man, for the novelty of the method seemed to be wearing off and they had begun to suspect that it was merely a means which the Mahatma was using to compel obedience after his appeal to reason had failed to convince his followers. The man in the street, not appreciating the significance of the fast, was inclined to sympathize with the plight of the British Government. The *N.Y. Times* observed:

Gandhi's latest fast, now happily concluded, is a bit hard to understand if we think of it as addressed to the outside world. A three-week hunger strike would not be an effective weapon against the British Government, since, to put it roughly, the British Government would probably expect Gandhi to come alive out of the ordeal. For the same reason the propaganda value on outside opinion other than British would be small. We might almost say that the outside world has lost a good deal of interest in that particular spiritual weapon.⁴¹

As previously, the liberal Press sympathized with Gandhi's motives and fully appreciated the implications of the fast. *The Nation* observed:

40. Sitaramayya, *op. cit.*, p. 558.

41. May 31, 1933.

Gandhi's fast which began on May 8 is directly aimed at the removal of untouchability. Indirectly it is aimed against British rule in India, and it may prove to be the most effective attack he has ever made The British authorities, in releasing him from prison, have seized upon their one means of self-defense, but Gandhi's death, even outside of jail, would have tremendous repercussions. . . . But it is certain that the fast, whether Gandhi survives it or not, by increasing Indian unity will mark a great step toward Indian independence.⁴²

The *Christian Century*, taking a wider view, said :

. . . The immediate struggle involved may be entirely within the Hindu community, but its ultimate effects may be felt in every part of the world. . . . The human stakes immediately at issue are, therefore, immense. The outcome, whatever it may turn out to be, is likely to go on shaping the course of history after every human being now living is dead.⁴³

On the 1st of August, 1933, after giving due notice to the Government of his intentions, Gandhi gave the lead to the movement of individual civil disobedience. He was arrested on August 4th and sentenced to one year's imprisonment. After a few days it turned out that the Government refused to grant him facilities for Harijan work, whereupon he again entered upon a fast. On the fifth day his condition grew bad and he was removed to hospital. Not wanting to have him die on its hands, the Government released him unconditionally on the 23rd of August, 1933.

Gandhi's fasts, arrests and subsequent releases had come in such quick succession that it almost began to lose its novel

42. May 17, 1933, 543.

43. May 17, 1933, 648.

character and interest for the American public—particularly that section which was not especially interested in India's problems. One, therefore, finds a marked paucity of comment about India in the press of that period. One of the few papers which commented was the *N.Y. Times*, which said:

After all, passive resistance, if it is exerted for an unyielding, uncompromising demand, is much the same thing as violence. If Gandhi is out to have things his own way, come what may, he might as well organize a Hindu Shirt Movement and prepare to use force.⁴⁴

The *Times* honestly portrayed a westerner's confusion in regard to the Gandhian technique of mixing up politics, social reform, fasts, passive resistance, self-immolation and what not. So one can quite appreciate the rather ironical comments made by the same paper a month later:

One does not hear so much of Gandhi, "the saint" as one used to. The world has come to recognize the weapons employed by the Mahatma may resemble the spiritual weapons of holiness, but at the bottom Gandhi is a very astute political leader; as he has every right to be. He makes use of passive resistance because, primarily, that is the only weapon available to the Hindu people.⁴⁵

Liberal opinion was always appreciative of Gandhi and his technique. *The Nation*, which often voiced its sentiments, said:

... Yet where else is there a spectacle of power faintly comparable to that of this frail body opposing its lone personality, peaceably yet effectively, against

44. August 27, 1933.

45. *Ibid.*, September 16, 1933,

the united land, sea and air forces of the British Empire ? Without any of the adjuncts which we regard as essential to power—without fortune or family, or office, or armed supporters—this humble Indian is known and revered all over the world because almost alone among the so-called great of the day there is not a shadow of a doubt of his utter unselfishness, of his complete devotion to his cause. We may or may not believe in Gandhi's objectives, but unless all of man's supposed progress upward from the cave is fictitious, unless the idea that reason is destined to prevail over brute force is false, then the methods and spirit of the Mahatma are bound to survive his weak and ungainly body and become an increasing power on the earth.⁴⁶

In order not to play the game of arrest, fast and release, Gandhi decided to refrain himself from all political activities for the balance of his term of sentence. By this time the movement had completely demoralized and many leaders began to think of reviving the old programme of the Swarajists—that is, the entry into the Legislatures. Consequently, the All-India Congress Committee, at its meeting held on the 18th and 19th of May, 1934, resolved to suspend the Civil Disobedience Movement in accordance with Gandhi's recommendation, and to enter into the Legislatures.

The political history of India from the suspension of the Civil Disobedience Movement until the outbreak of war in 1939 was uneventful, at least from the point of view of American interest, though events of no small significance took place. On June 12, 1934, the Government lifted the ban on the Congress. The White Paper of the Government brought forth severe criticism from the Congress, which considered that it in no way expressed the will of the people of India and fell far short of the Congress goal. The only satisfactory alternative to the White

46. August 16, 1933, 170.

Paper, in the opinion of the Congress, was a constitution drawn up by a Constituent Assembly elected by the people. Another important feature of this period was Gandhi's avowed intention to retire from politics. He wanted the affairs of the Congress to be run by younger men who, in many causes, did not subscribe to his views. It was hard for people then to believe in Gandhi divorcing himself entirely from politics, for his very life was inextricably interwoven with Indian politics. He did, of course, disassociate himself from any political activity and devoted himself entirely to reformist activities—particularly the cause of the Harijans. It was also a fact that after the suspension of the Civil Disobedience Movement there was no political activity in the country. The Congress met occasionally and its predominant activity was the passing of resolutions—as if to make up for the years it had been banned. In pursuance of its new policy of fighting in the Legislatures, it contested elections held under the new Act of 1935, which was the outcome of the Round Table Conference in London. The immediate object of the Congress in the Legislatures was to resist the introduction and working of this Act. In pursuance of this line of action, the Congress members in the various Legislatures often came into serious conflict with the Government. The Congress had formed ministries in seven out of eleven British Indian Provinces. They had stayed in the Legislatures for hardly two years (they assumed office in April of 1937), when, in 1939, they resigned their seats on the war issue.

Britain declared war against Hitlerite Germany, and being a dependency, India automatically became involved. Congress, though condemning fascism, refused to fight it. It refused to be a party to any war, for it believed that the issue of war and peace for India must be decided by the Indian people and no outside authority could impose a decision upon them; nor could the Indian people permit their resources to be exploited for an imperialist end. Thus followed another political struggle which reached its high watermark in 1942. After the

war, on the 15th of August, 1947, the British withdrew from India and transferred power to the Indians.

The period between the suspension of the Civil Disobedience Movement in May 1934 and the outbreak of war in 1939, witnessed a slackening of interest in Indian affairs in the American press. As early as December 1933, the *World Tomorrow* wrote : "The almost complete absence in our newspapers at present of any reference to India must not be taken to mean that there are no new developments in the Indian situation. . . ." ⁴⁷ There were, no doubt, important developments taking place, but they were not the kind likely to arouse much interest in the U.S.A. The few comments which did appear from time to time often failed to give a correct appraisal of the situation, as can be gathered from the remarks of the *New York Times* : "It is true that a majority of the Indian Congress has turned against Gandhi because of his enlightened stand on rights for the Depressed Class." ⁴⁸

One noteworthy feature of this period, as one gathers from a perusal of the press comments that Jawaharlal Nehru was frequently mentioned as a possible successor to Gandhi after the latter's retirement from politics. Observers saw, in this period, the political impracticability of Gandhi. They held that by turning aside from the immediate issues raised by the British White Paper to a campaign on behalf of the Untouchables, the Mahatma had committed the fundamental political error of dividing his strength between two objectives and in so doing had lost what chance he had of leading the Indian National Congress to victory in the pursuit of independence. Having thus proved his inaptitude, they maintained that it was inevitable that party leadership should pass to other hands, and the only likely person to hold the reigns was young Nehru. This view was not held in every quarter, however; some saw in Gandhi's retirement only a temporary retreat, as did the *New York Times* :

47. December 7, 1933, 653.

48. September 1, 1934.

Gandhi has retired as president of the Indian National Congress and will devote himself to the work of upbuilding village industries. . . . It does not mean Gandhi's retirement from politics, because no other leader has appeared to take his place. His earlier withdrawals from worldly affairs turned out to be merely strategic retirements.⁴⁹

The *Christian Century*, on the other hand, observed :

It is too early to predict what effect his withdrawal from the Congress presidency will have on the situation in India, although it is clear that the effect will be great. A struggle is likely to develop within the Congress between the socially conservative older generation of orthodox Hindus, who will be content to keep up a form of opposition to Britain so long as slight political concessions are made from time to time, and the younger men, led by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, are coming swiftly to believe that India requires both a social and political revolution. Some day Britain will realize that, in the withdrawal of Gandhi from politics, she has lost her best friend.⁵⁰

The apparent paradox that India found herself plunged into war to defend a democracy which she herself had not achieved, created serious complications for the British Empire in India. American interest in Indian politics began to revive.

49. *Ibid* , October 30, 1934.

50. November 7, 1934, 1396.

Resume of U.S. Public Opinion

American public opinion about Indian government and politics, in the period between the two world wars, was generally sympathetic to India's aspirations. Espousing the cause of peoples fighting for liberty and justice has always been in the best traditions of the American way of life. The average American loves freedom and democracy, and his sympathy automatically goes out to those who are struggling for these cherished ideals. The attitude, therefore, of a large section of the people who were interested in Indian affairs was influenced to a considerable extent by this tradition. This aspect of approach was given expression by a number of papers at various times and often as a reply to British criticism of their pro-Indian approach. The *Atlanta Constitution* aptly described the nature of American attitude toward Indian problems in these words:

There is a very natural temptation to Americans to sympathize with a national leader like Gandhi in India who is undertaking a great adventure for the liberty of his country and people.

We Americans had the sympathy, and no small measure of fighting aid, from other countries when

our forefathers declared for independence and fought the British king and power to a surrender to us of our land and sovereign rights. We have always sympathized with any people struggling anywhere for self-determination. Such sympathy cannot be regarded as an "unfriendly disposition" toward the holding nation whose dominion is being challenged.¹

When the *London Times* remarked, "If large numbers of readers in the United States have been watching the progress of the negotiations² through the Congress spectacles, the Government of India has itself to blame,"³ the *New York Times* made the following prompt reply which throws ample light on the American approach to Indian problems:

What is more natural than that large numbers of American readers should have followed the progress of events in India with sympathy for the Nationalist cause? Americans are human; that is to say, in the face of any engrossing contest, race, duel, they are bound to take sides. It is not unnatural for Americans to watch with interest a people struggling for self-government. . . .

If American opinion on India were the product solely of the propagandists we should find Americans taking their opinions from the Nationalist emissaries to this country or from bitterly anti-Nationalist books. But as a matter of fact predominant American opinion is with neither. Our people have thought and felt about India as people always do, in accordance with their own traditions, their basic sympathies, and their native common sense. The last-named element is one

1. May 5, 1930.

2. Refers to the Gandhi-Irwin talks in March, 1931.

3. Quoted in the *New York Times*, March 11, 1931.

that the propagandist theory of human action steadily refuses to take into consideration.⁴

American interest in Indian affairs began in some appreciable form in the early twenties, when Mahatma Gandhi started his Non-Co-operation Movement. Previous to that a few references were no doubt made and also some opinions expressed about the reforms as enunciated in the declaration of Mr. Montagu, Secretary of State for India, in the House of Commons in August 1917, but the comments were few and far between. Prior to Montagu's declaration, however, one would rarely find news or comment on India and her problems appearing in the U.S.A. for the simple reason that no important developments took place inside the country—at least not of a nature to arouse interest abroad. The Indian National Congress was there, but the nature of its work was not such as to attract attention. Its political activities were confined mostly to protest meetings, the passing of resolutions at its annual sessions, and the sending of deputations to the authorities in India or England. Besides, this verbal agitation was confined almost entirely to the cities and big towns, drawing in its orbit people, mostly from the upper middle class which formed a very small minority of the entire population, whose sole aim was to enjoy a greater share in the administration of the country. Such a state of affairs was not likely to be noticed outside of India.

The entrance of Mahatma Gandhi, already well-known for his South African campaign, with his weapon of non-violence, into the Indian political arena, changed the situation completely. The repressed feelings of the people, which had remained dormant for generations, were revived. India was aroused as if from slumber, and a powerful vibration began to sweep over every social stratum of the people in every corner of the country. New passions and new desires were abroad; or rather old

4. March 11, 1931.

passions and old desires were reincarnated with a new potency. With the passage of the Rowlatt Bills and the massacre at Amritsar in April 1919 the pent up energy burst forth in full force.

Previously, the American people at large had held very distorted notions about India and her people—their life and their problems. They had drawn for their knowledge on sources which were anything but authentic. To a majority of Americans, India was a dark continent infested with tigers and mosquitoes and people living a backward and superstitious life, bowed down by an inexplicable social system dominated by the caste conventions. It was a mysterious land, inhabited by yogis who sat on beds of nails, ate fire, charmed snakes and did the rope trick.

The political struggle of the Indians dispelled some of the old notions in certain quarters, but many misconceptions lingered on. It would not be wrong to say that a great majority of the American people knew little or nothing about the real India. The Non-Cooperation Movement no doubt aroused interest in certain quarters in the United States, but it was the personality of Gandhi and the methods he sought to employ for the emancipation of his people which were more intriguing. It will, therefore, be observed that the press in the early twenties wrote more about Gandhi and his technique of struggle than about the movement itself. The Mahatma's odd appearance and ascetic ways were a favourite topic for the journalist. This, of course, could not be said about the liberal opinion which, during the course of the movement, had often raised its voice in sympathy and encouragement, and had shown intelligent appreciation of India's problems.

The small section of the American press which commented on Indian problems during the course of the Non-Cooperation Movement could be divided into three distinct groups. First there was the liberal section which sympathized with the Indian struggle and was critical of British policy toward India. Second, there was that section which was critical of Gandhi and

his movement and which at times displayed anti-Indian sentiments, considering the Indian Nationalists a mere handful of agitators out to disturb the peace of the country. Oftentimes this group dilated at length on the benefits of British rule and the consequent chaos which would ensue in India if the British withdrew their strong hand. To them, India was nothing but a conglomeration of irreconcilable races, cultures, creeds and languages. They favoured British domination and did not consider the Indians fit for self-government. In the third category was the neutral section whose interest in Indian problems was limited to Gandhi and his unique struggle. Once in a while some of these papers or journals would step aside from their neutral course and give expression to views similar to those of the liberal or the critical sections.

After the withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation Movement by Gandhi, and his subsequent imprisonment, American interest in India dwindled. The majority of the press, save for the liberal section, considered the Movement an utter failure, and to them Gandhi appeared no more than an impractical visionary. As a matter of fact, his critics had always considered him so, and the termination of the movement only confirmed their opinion.

For about half a decade there was a lull in the political life of India. The great revolutionary force lay dormant. The Indian National Congress was at grips with British imperialism inside the Councils. The common man had no part to play in the drama. The Mahatma had practically retired from active service. This unexciting atmosphere was not likely to arouse interest in the American press, but with the emergence of the Simon Commission on the Indian scene in 1928, the Indians were aroused to action. News about India began to appear once again in the American press, accompanied by editorial comment.

The Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930 and the Round Table Conferences in London aroused great interest in America—much more than ever before. More papers and journals commented on Indian problems than they did in the

early twenties. During the course of the Non-Cooperation Movement, Gandhi was the centre of interest for the greater section of the press, while in the early thirties the papers wrote mostly about the various aspects of the Civil Disobedience Movement and the problems involved. Besides, the approach of the press to the Indian problem also changed during this period. Liberal opinion was consistent throughout in its belief that Indians, in spite of all the differences of caste, creed and religion which in its opinion were exaggerated, should manage their own affairs and the British Government should take active steps to relinquish power as early as possible.

The section of the press which was critical of India modified its attitude. Though conceding, to some extent, the right of the Indians to rule themselves, it believed that they were so far from being able to manage their affairs that a withdrawal of the British hand would leave chaotic conditions in its wake. It supported the British point of view of some grant of reform, but not a complete relinquishment of power. A part of this section did not give up its old anti-Indian attitude; it maintained that the pace of reforms should be extremely slow and did not consider Indians fit even for Dominion status. For all the riots and unrest in India, it would blame Gandhi who, in its opinion, was a menace to civilization. It completely failed to understand the Mahatma and what he stood for.

The neutral press, on the other hand, agreed in principle with the liberal section as to the inherent right of the Indians to rule themselves, and at the same time was greatly influenced by the exaggerated accounts of the diverse and irreconcilable elements in Indian society. It, therefore, believed in a slow pace for reforms, leading to Dominion status, lest India would have to pay an enormous price in human lives and human happiness if Britain withdrew prematurely.

The main reason for the change in the opinion in 1930 appears to be that during the preceding decade the American public had become familiar, to some extent, with the Indian problem. Gandhi was no longer the centre of attraction,

though his importance was not minimized. Eyewitness accounts of the movement were more common in 1930 than in 1921. The discipline of the non-violent resisters, the repressive measures of the Government, the ideals for which the men and women of India stood and suffered, created a great impression on the American people. As in 1921, the British propagandists could not convince the Americans that the Nationalists who faced "lathi" blows and machine-gun fire were merely a handful of agitators inspired by Gandhi for mischief. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the sentiment expressed were more sympathetic to India.

One notable feature of the period was the change in the attitude of the American Church towards India. In 1921, during the course of the Non-Cooperation Movement, a large section of the Church was unsympathetic to India's aspirations, genuinely believing in the incapacity of the Indians to govern themselves. They thought in the same terms as did the pro-British Press. The reason appears to be that they were misinformed about conditions in India, as has been referred to in Chapter I. During the course of the Non-Cooperation Movement, they considered Gandhi an impractical visionary, but a metamorphosis of opinion took place in the latter part of the twenties. The Church was greatly impressed by the personality of Gandhi. Being a Hindu, his ways of life, his insistence on love, tolerance and truth, were all based on Christian precepts. In the opinion of the Church, Gandhi was truly following in the footsteps of Christ. Great tributes were paid to him by various Christian journals. The following sentiments, expressed editorially by the *Catholic World*, convey the general attitude of the majority of the Churchmen towards Mahatma Gandhi and his movement :

If there be a really noble experiment in progress in any country at this moment, it is the sublime, though perhaps quixotic attempt of Mahatma Gandhi to win freedom for some three hundred million people without waging war. A noble experiment, and unique....

No nation ever gained or regained its independence except by the sword—its own sword or someone else's.

True, the Christian religion achieved toleration by simple endurance. Those that took blood wore out before those that gave their blood. But since the days of Diocletian there has been no great pacifist victory, in Christendom or out of it. It remained—be it said to our shame—for a Hindu, a heathen, "suckled in a creed outworn" to make the second attempt to vindicate, on a majestic scale, the philosophy of the Sermon on the Mount. I hope I may say that much without being accused of making a Christ of Gandhi. Jesus, Himself, held up the Samaritan, a heretic, to the admiration of the orthodox. So I dare say we followers of Christ need not deny that there can be saints and heroes among the "lesser breeds without the law."⁵

During the various phases of the Civil Disobedience Movement, prominent liberals and clergymen raised their voices in support of Gandhi and his movement, and at times in protest against the repressive measures used by the British Government against people fighting for liberty. On February 9, 1930, twelve of the foremost liberals⁶ in the United States declared in a manifesto to the American public that the peace of the world depended upon the manner in which Great Britain

5. July 1930, 482.

6. John Dewey, Professor, Columbia University ; Oswald Garrison Villard, Editor, *The Nation* ; Norman Thomas, Socialist Candidate for U.S. Presidency; Rev. John Haynes Holmes, Minister, Community Church, New York ; Dr. J. T. Sunderland, author of *India in Bondage*; Robert Morss Lovett, Professor, University of Chicago ; William Floyd, Editor, *The Arbitrator* ; Roger Baldwin, Director, American Civil Liberties Union ; Devere Allen, Ed., *The World Tomorrow* ; Dr. Charles Fleischer, former editor, *New York American* ; B. W. Huebsch, the Viking Press, New York ; Louis Adams Floyd, Ex-President, The Civic Club, New York.

received the movement for Indian independence through non-violent aggression. They said that if Great Britain attempted to repress the Indian movement with force, "passions will be unloosed the end of which no man can see. . . . Not one but a chain of wars may conceivably follow upon violent revolt and violent repression, involving not two but many nations and making mockery of all our efforts after peace."⁷ They added :

We Americans are without direct power or direct responsibility in the matter. But in our little world we cannot look unmoved upon this crisis. We have not only a right but a duty to put the imponderable power of public opinion behind an urgent plea to the Indian people to persist in the non-violent paths in which they have chosen to lead mankind and to the British Government to justify confidence in its zeal and capacity as the pioneer of peace by agreement and good will.⁸

The *New York Times* carried a news item that seven clergymen⁹ of New York City had sent a message to the Pope, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the President of the Federal Council of Churches and the Presiding Bishop of the American Episcopal Church, urging that the peaceful efforts of Mahatma Gandhi and his followers for the freedom of India be looked upon with sympathy by these "representatives, heads of Christendom."¹⁰

On May 9, 1930, the following cablegram was sent by Dr. John Haynes Holmes and 100 other American clergymen to Minister Ramsay MacDonald at London :

In the interest of India, Britain and the world, we

7. Quoted in the *New York Times*, February 10, 1930.

8. *Ibid.*

9. Edmund B. Chaffee, Abel J. Gregg, John Haynes Holmes, Clarence V. Howells, Edwin Fairley, Sydney Strong, H. F. Ward.

10. Quoted in the *New York Times*, April 18, 1930.

beg you to seek the way to an amicable settlement with Gandhi and his people.

As ministers of religion who cherish the principles of democracy, freedom and brotherhood which you represent, and who believe in the spiritual ideals which Gandhi sublimely embodies, we refuse to believe that you and Gandhi cannot work together. We look to you who hold power and authority in this crisis to avoid the tragedy of a conflict which would mean a catastrophe for Britain, India and mankind.¹¹

Many more instances could be found where prominent Americans raised their voices for a peaceful settlement of the Indian issue and supported the cause of the Indians. Resolutions had been moved in the Congress to that effect, as is apparent from the following news item in the *New York Times* :

A resolution calling upon the United States Government to use its good offices for the peaceful settlement of the Indo-British conflict without abridgement of the "just rights of the people of India" was introduced in the Senate today by Senator John J. Blaine of Wisconsin. Some months ago Mr. Blaine sponsored a resolution favoring recognition of Indian "Independence" from the time when the All-India Nationalist Congress voted for "freedom" last December at Lahore.

The preamble of today's resolution spoke of alleged "atrocities" by British armed forces against unarmed Indian men, women and children and quoted the joint statement made by President Hoover and Prime Minister MacDonald on October 10 last, to the effect that "all disputes (between nations) should be settled by pacific means."

The resolution seeks to have the Senate declare that

11. May 10, 1930.

it "deplores such acts of violence, infamy and inhumanity committed by one signatory of the Kellogg Pact against another signatory of the peace pact," and that, "As India is an original signatory of the Kellogg-Briant peace pact, the United States Senate instructs the State Department to use its best offices to insure peaceful settlement of the India struggle with no abridgement of the just rights of the people of India who are seeking to emulate our own national independence."¹²

It is, therefore, clear that a strong pro-Indian undercurrent was running in America during the time of the Civil Disobedience Movement. Pro-Indian sentiments were mostly confined to the East Coast; this might be attributed to the fact that in the eastern states, public opinion was better informed with respect to foreign affairs and thus less liable to be influenced by propagandists. It will be noted, too, that the pro-British opinions expressed were also confined mostly to the eastern states. British propaganda worked hardest in this section of the country.

It should also be mentioned that all through this period British propaganda was busy attempting to win the sympathy of the Americans. All manner of propaganda was used—lectures, books, pamphlets, articles in journals, motion pictures, etc. All were devised to emphasize the benefits of British rule in India and the indigenous obstacles standing in the way of self-government. The main thesis put forward by these propagandists was that Indians were not fit to rule themselves, at least for quite a good time to come, and that Britain was very anxious to do all in her power to train the Indians in the art of self-rule. Some, in their zeal, even attacked the social and religious customs of the Indian people.

But in spite of the work of the propagandists, American sympathy for India increased as time passed. This might be attributed to the causes which have already been noted above—

12. July 18, 1930.

the growing familiarity of the Americans with Indian problems, and the natural propensity of mind of the American people to uphold the cause of all those struggling for independence.

In educating American public opinion about India, the work of many distinguished Indians cannot be over-stated. Many prominent Indians such as Rabindranath Tagore, Lala Lajpat Rai and Mrs. Sarojini Naidu visited the United States and placed the Indian point of view before the people. Besides these, there were a number of Indian patriots who were forced to leave their motherland and who, under great hardship, worked in America for India's liberty. Of the many, the most notable were Dr. Taraknath Das, Mr. Shilendra Ghose and Dr. Har Dayal. The ceaseless and selfless efforts of such patriotic Indians helped immeasurably to arouse the active interest of America in the cause of India's freedom.

India achieved her independence on the 15th of August, 1947, and the event was hailed by the American press. It was considered by all to be a personal victory for Mahatma Gandhi and a testimony of the power of the spirit over brute force. The untimely death, a few months later, of the Father of the new nation was universally mourned, and the press, almost without exception, joined in paying tribute to the "great soul."

During her short period of independence, India has made great progress. Unfortunately, however, the great political, social and economic changes that are taking place in India now are not fully appreciated by the average American. The press is full of the "cold war" and events across the Atlantic, and little news from the East appears on the pages of the American papers.

Today, India looks to the future with hope and courage. She is destined to play a major role in world politics especially in the East. The friendship and co-operation of the United States of America with a free and democratic India, will constitute a stabilizing factor in international politics and contribute immeasurably to the peace and prosperity of the world.

*Roosevelt's Role
in India's Liberation*

On September 1, 1939, the world was once again plunged into war. India, a dependency of Britain, was automatically dragged into the conflict. The Working Committee of the Indian National Congress declared:

“This Committee cannot associate itself or offer any cooperation in a war which is conducted on imperialistic lines and which is meant to consolidate imperialism in India or elsewhere.”¹

The Congress wanted a statement in unequivocal terms from the British Government regarding war aims, and demanded that India be declared an independent nation with effective power to be transferred forthwith. The Muslim League, on the other hand, extended co-operation to the British on the condition that the League be considered the only representative organization of the Muslims and that no declaration be made regarding constitutional advance nor any constitution framed and adopted without its approval. The reluctance on the part of the British

1. *India Annual Register*, 1939, Vol. II, p. 231.

Government to accede to the Congress demands resulted in the latter's resigning from office in eight out of eleven British Indian provinces in which they formed majority governments under the Government of India Act, 1935. The Muslim League observed December 22, 1939, the day the Congress Governments resigned, as a "Day of Deliverance." Co-operation in the war effort was cleverly exploited by Mr. Jinnah, leader of the League, to gain power and influence in the British counsel.

Events of great importance were taking place in India, but they were not likely to attract much attention elsewhere, particularly in America, for the European war was the main concern of the peoples of the Western world. Nevertheless, it would be not correct to say that India was totally out of the American mind. It was only after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour in December 1941 and quick move southward in Asia, however, that America became aware of the need of Indian co-operation in the war. General Eisenhower has said,

"Aside from preserving lines of air and sea communication to Australia, we had to hold the Indian bastion at all cost, otherwise junction between the Japanese and German forces would be accomplished through the Persian Gulf."²

On February 15, 1942, Singapore surrendered to the Japanese, and on March 8 Rangoon also fell into their hands. Thus there grew in the United States an increasing demand that the British Government come to terms with the Indian National Congress and other political parties for the more effective co-operation of the Indian people in the war effort. On the other hand, policy-makers in America were reluctant to put strong diplomatic pressure on Britain or encourage extensive public discussion on the subject for fear of straining Anglo-American relations.

2. *Crusade in Europe* by Dwight D. Eisenhower, New York, Doubleday, 1948, p. 28.

President Roosevelt, though unwilling to twist the tail of the British lion, nevertheless sent a long cable to Churchill on March 10, 1942, the day before Churchill announced that Sir Stafford Cripps would go to India to present certain proposals of the British Cabinet to the Indian leaders. Referring to the analogy of the thirteen American colonies during the American Revolution, the President suggested, in that long cable, the setting up of a Government to be headed by a small group of representatives of religious, geographical and occupational groups. It would be representative of the existing British provinces and the Council of Princes and would be recognized as temporary Indian Dominion Government. This representative group would be charged with the duty of "considering the structure of the permanent Government of India, such consideration to extend for a period of five or six years or at least until a year after the end of the present war."³ This provisional Government, according to the President's suggestion, was in the meantime to exercise executive and administrative authority over public services such as finance, railways, telegraphs, etc. Some such scheme would, he believed, "cause the people of India to forget past hard feelings and would induce them to become loyal to the British."⁴ Lest his suggestions might appear an interference in the internal affairs of the Empire and irritate the British Prime Minister, he was at the outset careful to state that :

"Of course, this is a subject which all of you good people know far more than I do and I have felt much diffidence in making any suggestions concerning it."⁵

He added, later on :

"This is of course none of my business, and for the

3. *White House Papers of Harry L. Hopkins*, Vol. II, pp. 515-16, Eyre and Spottiswood London, 1949.

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*

love of Heaven do not bring me into this though I do want to be helpful.”⁶

Churchill's reaction may be clearly observed in the remarks of Robert E. Sherwood, who wrote :

“It is probable that the only part of that cable with which Churchill agreed was Roosevelt's admission that it ‘is none of my business’. Hopkins said a long time later that he did not think that any suggestions from the President to the Prime Minister in the entire war were so wrathfully received as those relating to the solution of the Indian problem.”⁷

The gravity of the situation made it apparent even to Churchill, however, that India's co-operation was essential. Therefore, on March 22, 1942, Sir Stafford Cripps arrived in India with proposals from the British Government. The scheme envisaged a Constituent Assembly representing Princely States and the British Indian Provinces for the purpose of framing the constitution of the country. The proposal provided an option for any States to stay out of the federal scheme of Government to be set up by the proposed Constituent Assembly or to join it at a later stage. The future Government of India and also of the non-acceding Provinces and States if they favoured their own union, would enjoy the status of a Dominion.

The second part of the proposals provided for the reconstitution of the Viceroy's Executive Council. This body was to be composed of the leaders of the principal political parties and, with the exception of Defence, all powers of the Government were to be transferred to it.

The Cripps proposals failed to satisfy the Indian nationalist leaders. The British Government was not willing to transfer substantial powers to Indian hands, and Gandhi described the

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.*

proposals as a "post-dated cheque on a crashing bank." In a series of articles in the *Harijan*, he urged the immediate withdrawal of the British. These sentiments of the Mahatma were later crystallized in the "Quit India" Movement.

President Roosevelt took keen interest in the outcome of the Cripps negotiations, and the failure of the talks was a source of great concern to him. He did not see eye to eye with Churchill on the Indian issue, and sympathized with the point of view of the Indian leaders. In his letter to the British Prime Minister dated April 11, 1942, he conveyed in no uncertain terms his feelings in the matter. He told Churchill that there was universal feeling in America that the deadlocks in the talks had been caused by Britain's unwillingness to concede the right to self-government to the Indian people :

"... notwithstanding the willingness of the Indians to entrust technical, military and naval defence control to the competent British authorities.

"If the Cripps talks failed and India was subsequently invaded with success by Japan with attendant serious military or naval reverses for the Allies, the prejudicial reaction on American public opinion can hardly be over estimated."⁸

The President added,

"I am sorry to say that I cannot agree with the point of view set forth in your message to me that public opinion in the U.S. believes that the negotiations have failed on broad general issues. The general impression here is quite the contrary."

The President did not want to jeopardize Anglo-American

8. U.S. State Department document '*Foreign Relations of the U.S., 1942*,' Vol. I, Quoted in *The Hindustan Times* of June 21, 1960.

solidarity by making the Indian case a public issue, but he did convey that the American public could not understand why, if the British Government was willing to permit the component parts of India to secede from the British Empire after the war, it was not willing to permit them to enjoy what was tantamount to self-government during the war. Although the British Prime Minister was adamant, he assured the President that

“Anything like a serious difference between you and me would break my heart and surely deeply injure both our countries at the height of this terrible struggle.”⁹

Roosevelt therefore kept his discussions with Churchill on the subject of Indian Independence on as informal a basis as possible. Cordell Hull remarked in his memoirs that in publicly stating his conviction that subject people be assisted towards self-government and eventual independence, the President kept his sentiments general without making specific reference to India.

“But in private conversations, the President talked very bluntly about India with Prime Minister Churchill While for the sake of good relations with Britain we could not tell the country what we were saying privately, we were saying everything that the most enthusiastic supporters of Indian freedom could have expected and we were convinced that the American people were with us.”¹⁰

So rigid was Churchill's attitude, that Roosevelt could not prevail upon him even to apply the provisions of the Atlantic Charter to India. The historic document in which the leaders of the allied powers had proclaimed their noble determination

9. *The Hindustan Times*, 21.6.60.

10. *The Memoires of Cordell Hull*, Vol. II, 1948, p. 1483.

"to respect the rights of all people to choose the form of government under which they will live" was a dead letter as far as the people of India and other parts of the Empire were concerned. In an address to the House of Commons on September 19, 1941, Churchill excluded India from the application of the Charter and declared that its provisions had no effect on British policy in respect of the Empire. America's Ambassador Winant had tried in vain to persuade the British Prime Minister to eliminate any reference to India in his speech before the House.

Colonel Louis Johnson, President Roosevelt's wartime envoy to India, actively participated in the Cripps negotiations, and this was greatly appreciated by the Indian leaders. Johnson left India in May 1942, and in December of the same year William Phillips, a senior member of the American Foreign Service, was named presidential envoy to New Delhi with the personal rank of Ambassador. In his famous report on the political deadlock in India caused by the failure of the Cripps Mission, Phillips strongly advised President Roosevelt to take a firm line against Britain and intervene in securing India's independence. He wrote,

"I feel strongly, Mr. President, that in view of the military position in India, we should have a voice in these matters. It is not right for the British to say this is none of your (American) business when we alone presumably will have the major part to play in the struggle with Japan. . . . Words are of no avail ; they only aggravate the present situation. It is time for the British to act. This they can do by solemn declaration from the King-Emperor that India will achieve her independence at a specified date after the war and that as a guarantee of good faith in this respect, a provisional representative coalition government will be reestablished at the Centre and limited powers transferred to it."¹¹

11. Quoted from *The Hindustan Times*, June 22 1960.

Britain reacted very strongly to the publication of brief extracts from this report in the United States in 1944, and asked the President not to permit the return of Ambassador Phillips to his post in India.

In June 1945, the British Government made another effort to solve the Indian problem. On the 25th of that month a conference was held at Simla with leaders of the various political parties attending. The conference ended in a deadlock. The American Government again showed keen interest in the question. Lawrance K. Rosinger, an expert on Far Eastern affairs, remarked,

“Even before the end of the war, Indo-American political relations began to enter a new, more active phase. Through diplomatic channels, the United States played a part in the release of the Indian leaders from prison and in the organization of the Simla Conference in June-July 1945. The Viceroy—the supreme British official in India—the Congress and the Muslim League participated. Although the Conference failed, the Congress leaders probably appreciated the American Government's renewed positive interest in the search for an Indian settlement.”¹²

In August 1945, the war ended, and after the general elections in Britain, the Labour Government came into power with Clement Attlee as Prime Minister. The new Government sent a Cabinet Mission to India with new proposals. It arrived in Karachi on March 23, 1946. This mission failed principally because it could not bring about agreement between the Congress and the Muslim League on the composition of the proposed Constituent Assembly. A few months later, another Cabinet delegation came to India with new proposals which were announced simultaneously in India and in England on May

12. *India and U.S.*, Rosinger, The MacMillan Co., New York, 1956, p. 12.

16, 1946. After protracted negotiations a difference of opinion arose between the Congress and the League with respect to the interpretation of certain provisions in the proposal. The British Government intervened and declared that they would uphold the contentions of the League, and on December 6, 1946, announced,

“Should a constitution come to be framed by the Constituent Assembly in which a large section of the Indian population had not been represented, His Majesty’s Government would not contemplate forcing such a constitution upon any unwilling part of the country.”¹³

This statement was, in effect, acceptance of the Muslim League’s demand for the division of India. On February 20, 1947, the Government made an historic statement in which they declared that British rule in India would end by June 1948 and if a fully representative Constituent Assembly failed to make a constitution in accordance with the proposals made by the Cabinet delegation,

“... His Majesty’s Government will have to consider to whom the provinces of the Central Government in British India should be handed over on the due date, whether as a whole to some form of Central Government for British India or in some areas to the existing Provincial Governments or in such other way as seems most reasonable and in the best interest of the Indian people.”¹⁴

This further strengthened the position of the Muslim League. The division of India was virtually implicit in the declaration and the Congress was forced to accept the inevitable.

13. Quoted from *The Indian Independence Act and the Dominions of India and Pakistan* by D. B Basu, Calcutta, Shree Krishna Printing Works, p 4.

14. *Ibid.*

Lord Louis Mountbatten was sent to India as Governor-General to expedite the transfer of power to the hands of the Indians. Soon after his assumption of office on March 24, 1946, he held a series of conferences with Indian leaders to explore new schemes for the settlement of the baffling problem. On June 3, 1947, after consultation with the Home Government, he issued a statement providing for the division of India which the Congress reluctantly agreed to accept. It was left to the ingenuity of the dynamic Governor-General to bring the League and the Congress to an agreement on the details of partition. The Muslim majority areas were cut off from the country and consolidated into a new state of Pakistan, and the British Parliament speedily drafted and passed the Indian Independence Bill creating two independent Dominions. Indian independence came into force on August 15, 1947. True to his promise, Churchill was not present "to preside at the liquidation of His Majesty's Empire."

Throughout the war, the Indian problem had defied solution. Curiously enough, in her time of difficulty, when the fate of the Empire hung in the balance, the British Government refused to accede to the Indian demands, but victorious Britain announced the termination of her rule in India by a particular date. Some observers believe the Labour Government was solely responsible for the change of attitude. Others consider it was directly due to the pressure of world public opinion, particularly in the United States, although America's insistence that India's demands be met was more vehement during the war when the Japanese were making rapid headway towards South East Asia. The Indian leaders attributed it to their own strength. Whatever the reason, it is curious indeed that British diehards, particularly the wartime Prime Minister who throughout his life had been a relentless opponent of India's aspirations, remained quiet and allowed the liquidation of the Empire to take place before their eyes. The Indian Independence Act was passed with the least possible delay and without any firm opposition, although Churchill, consistent to the end, cast a negative vote.

There is no doubt that the war accelerated the attainment of independence by India. It blasted the foundations of the British edifice so assiduously built up over the centuries, and India, in fact, to the 'nation of shopkeepers' as Napoleon called the British, became a losing concern.

Numerous British assets had passed to Indian hands during the war, and after it was over, Britain found herself a debtor country to India. Obviously, British investments, whatever remained and any that might be established in the future, would be safer in a friendly and independent India than in an India struggling to free herself from British rule. The twentieth century has demonstrated that territorial acquisition is not the characteristic feature of modern imperialism. It is of little practical value unless it offers channels for profitable investment of capital exported from the mother country. Credit goes to the statesmanship of the British who, unlike the Portuguese, were able to appreciate the signs of the times.

The independence of India and the emergence of the United States as the most powerful country in the world are two of the most important features of the post-war period. Both countries have new responsibilities to shoulder: America must bear the burdens of a leader of the Western World; to the people of India, independence is the culmination of a long struggle, the fulfilment of their urges and aspirations, a dream come true, but it has brought with it awesome problems and responsibilities. Happily, the two countries began their new careers with profound feelings of good will for each other.

The Republic of India and the United States of America have much in common. Neither has territorial ambitions, and geographical distance leaves little scope for conflicts which can result from proximity. Both ardently desire world peace and believe in the rule of law in international affairs. Both countries have known British domination and in many respects share a common heritage. As Prime Minister Nehru said in Washington on November 9, 1961, past history, common objectives and ideals, and the call of the future, have pushed

India and the United States in the direction of friendship and cooperation.

"We may not agree with the American people always, but you have always seemed in some ways near to us, near in certain ideals you hold and which are enshrined in your constitution and which we took into our own constitution, and your open-hearted friendship and hospitality."¹⁵

In spite of all this, however, the two countries have differed in their approach to world problems. This is, to some extent, inevitable. Foreign policy is bound to be influenced by factors which differ from country to country—factors such as geography, internal conditions, traditions, culture. As Norman D. Palmer puts it,

"One does not have to subscribe to the East *versus* West fallacy to assert that the world looks quite different when viewed from different parts of it and through the eyes of people whose life conditions, cultural values and experience differ greatly."¹⁶

Pandit Nehru remarked in a television broadcast when replying to a journalist's question,

"... there is a tendency for leading statesmen in Europe and America to look at things from the European and American point of view. If you look at the same thing from Delhi or Karachi, the problem looks slightly different. Take the question of China. China is a distant country to the people in Europe and

15. *The Hindustan Times*, November 10, 1961.

16. "Ups and Downs in Indo-American Relations" by Norman D. Palmer, *The Annals*, Vol. 296, July 1954, p. 113.

- o America. But China has 2000 miles of frontier with India. It is a different picture."¹⁷

India is in full agreement with the United States regarding the basic principle of her foreign policy—namely, the maintenance of international peace and security. The differences of opinion relate to the means, not to the end. India believes that her capacity to play an effective role in world affairs and to the maintenance of international peace depends to a considerable extent on her internal strength and cohesion. The principal problem confronting India is not communism, particularly international communism; rather it is the strengthening of her governmental structure, the raising of the standard of living of her four hundred million people. Therefore, issues at home assume more importance than issues abroad. The fight against poverty, disease and subversive forces tending to undermine democratic processes, demand more attention than do international problems. In a speech before the Indian Parliament, Prime Minister Nehru remarked,

“Nobody doubts that these domestic problems for us are ultimately of far greater importance than any international problems because the international problem or any part that we may play in it, ultimately depends upon our internal strength, upon our internal cohesion and all that. . . . The basic thing is the domestic policy that a country follows, and to some extent the foreign policy is a reflection of that.”¹⁸

The Government of India, naturally, is disturbed by any development which threatens to interfere with her internal reconstruction, and no threat is more disturbing than the threat of global war. The Government is doing everything within

17. *The Hindustan Times*, June 14, 1953.

18. *Ibid.*, December 24, 1953.

its power to help in the preservation of peace. The attitude of the Government of India in this connection was aptly stated by Mr. George McGhee, former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Near East, South Asian and African Affairs, when he wrote,

"As leaders responsible for the destiny of a very young nation, their attitude might be expressed in the words of another prominent statesman who said, 'with me a predominant motive has been to endeavour to gain time for our country to settle and mature its yet recent institutions and to progress without interruption that degree of strength and consistency which is necessary to give it, humanly speaking, the command of its own fortunes.' That statement by George Washington is even more cogent when we apply it to the masses of India's population; the great dislocations which India is undergoing as a result of the precipitate withdrawal of the British authority and the pressure of the present time. With this background in mind, the strong desire of Indian leaders to let nothing interfere with the strengthening of their country, it is apparent why India is making every effort to stay out of the so-called cold war and to avoid possible involvement in a shooting war should it come."¹⁹

India's policy of attempting, as far as possible, to keep out of any international involvement, evoked, in the early fifties, a great deal of criticism in the United States although, as Vincent Sheean put it,

"This policy is indistinguishable from the declared foreign policy of the U.S.A. during the first 150 years of its existence. It was sound American doctrine up to only three years ago."²⁰

19. *Ibid.*, June 2, 1951.

20. *Foreign Affairs*, October, 1951.

The United States changed her policy of isolation only when she found herself compelled to engage in the vast enterprise of reconstruction and defence of the western world. But India's position cannot be compared with that of the U.S.A. Geographically, India is a mere stone's throw from the world's two most powerful communist countries. Her army, though good, is small, and her resources are extremely limited. Vincent Sheean aptly put forward the Indian position when he said,

"India's geographical position is such that any military alliance with the U.S. would be, to say the least, delusional. For the sake of that delusion, and in order to take a place at the bottom of the list of applicants for military and economic assistance, would any sensible Indian Government invite an invasion from the immense Communist territories of the Eurasian continent and to plunge into military alliance against the neighbouring Sino-Russian power, to proclaim it an enemy would be rash and fatal. And in addition to all these realistic considerations there is the further fact, important in India, if nowhere else, that the country has a moral legacy of considerable persuasiveness, which sets its mind against military combinations and involvement."²¹

What, in fact, is India's foreign policy? The Indian Government may be said to have a three-point program—firstly, to promote international peace; secondly, to give moral support to the cause of peoples struggling for freedom; thirdly, to avoid involvement in the cold war or East-versus-West controversies. Each of these aspects of India's program has been subject to criticism from time to time and from various quarters. The aspect which has aroused severe criticism, particularly from the United States, is the policy of non-alignment or "Indian neutrality" as Americans call it. India was subject to a great

21. *Ibid.*

deal of harsh criticism in the early nineteen-fifties ; this was the logical outcome of the attitude held by some Americans : "those who are not with us are against us." These critics did not appreciate the fact that non-alignment is not a negative concept. It simply conceives of friendly relations towards all countries which are willing to reciprocate and, along with this, a firm refusal to join any military alliance of one group against another. It also means taking decisions on the merits of the case in point regardless of the alignments of the powers concerned. Nehru clarified this in a speech before Parliament when he said,

"If we align ourselves with the groups, I am not criticising them, but I do say that—that alignment means giving up any policy that we may independently seek to pursue and that means giving up our independence insofar as that matter is concerned. It means others telling us what policy to pursue ; it means not functioning as an independent country but as a dependent and satellite country."²²

Non-alignment gives India freedom and flexibility in her foreign affairs. The Government of India believes that her non-involvement in the cold war may increase her usefulness in relaxing international tensions and in the work of reconciliation. This policy can be a factor for the removal of fear as an influence on foreign policies on both sides of the Iron Curtain.

One of the offshoots of India's policy of non-alignment which has been a source of irritation to America is her attitude towards international communism. India does not subscribe to the measures the U.S.A. takes against communist countries. The emergence of Soviet Russia as a world power after the second World War has posed a threat to the United States of a magnitude unprecedented in American history. Almost the

22. *The Hindustan Times*, September 24, 1953.

entire energies of the U.S.A. are directed towards taking measures against this international danger. These measures have assumed such proportions that many have come to believe that communism has grown into almost an obsession with the American people. Secretary of State John Dulles called communism "immoral." The U.S. Government has created a network of alliances all over the world and in the process has supported regimes which are undemocratic. Dulles, in his crusade against the "devil" communism, went to the length of supporting the view of the Salazar regime in declaring Goa a part of the metropolitan area of Portugal. An important aspect of America's precautionary measures against the threat of communism has been armed aid to Pakistan, much to the annoyance of Indians who believe that this has brought the cold war nearer to them and has made the peaceful solution of the Kashmir problem extremely difficult. A Pakistan armed with modern weapons of war is a threat to India's security, and consequently India has to direct much-needed money away from her internal reconstruction programs to safeguard her frontier. Her fears are allayed by America's assurance that one of the conditions of aid to Pakistan is that the arms will not be used against India. Nevertheless, Indians do not want to see their country's security jeopardized on the assumption that in case of war Pakistan would abide scrupulously by that condition. These feelings have been shared by India's neighbours. Pandit Nehru said before Parliament,

"...But look at the reactions of Asian countries. I do not know how far the Honourable Members have read these reactions of the press of many countries in Western Asia, in South or South-East Asia. Almost in every country, almost without exception, these reports of military aid, [etc., coming to Pakistan from the United States of America have been viewed with concern. . . . In this connection I might say that the Prime Minister of Burma expressed himself rather strongly the other day about this military aid from the

U.S. to Pakistan. The Prime Minister of Ceylon also did so."²³

The tendency on the part of some in the West to measure the strength of the free world in terms of armament and in terms of military alliances and military aid, cannot be fully subscribed by the people in the East. There is no doubt that the military strength of the U.S.A. and other western countries should not be ignored, but there should be a growing realization that democratic Asia is equally essential to the peace and security of the world. Democracy in Asia cannot be strengthened by tanks and planes, nor can it be conceived solely in terms of food and public health and economic aid. Democratic forces and institutions in Asian countries can develop and grow unhindered if protected from subversive forces from within and without. But, as remarked by Mr. Nehru,

"... acceptance by Pakistan of American military aid would reverse the process of liberation and freedom of Asia and lessen the chances of peace."²⁴

India's attitude towards international communism is governed by factors which are, as a matter of fact, interrelated. The first factor is the logical outcome of her policy of non-alignment; not only does she not take a militant attitude towards communist countries but, on the contrary, is on friendly terms with them—particularly with Russia. Her relations with China have lately been strained by the aggressive designs of the Peking Government. The second factor governing India's attitude towards communism is her intense desire to build up democratic institutions in the country and to raise the standard of living of her people. Unfortunately her friendly relations with communist countries, and Nehru's leaning towards socialism, have been

23. *The Hindustan Times*, (Dec. 24, 1957.

24. *The Hindustan Times*, Dec. 24, 1953.

misunderstood to some extent in America. However, Vincent Sheean clarified the situation when he wrote,

“But to suppose that Mr. Nehru has a weakness for communism is arrant nonsense. He has been personally responsible and has publicly accepted responsibility for the imprisonment without trial of practically every Indian communist organizer or agitator of any consequence. The number is not precisely known. It changes constantly. But I heard that some 12,000 to 15,000 communists are in prison. This is done with the utmost security and without trial, *habeas corpus* or any other constitutional safeguard which are observed in the U.S.”²⁵

No less a person than President Kennedy said, in answer to a journalist's question on the occasion of Nehru's visit to the United States,

“I never thought quite obviously to use your phrase that Mr. Nehru works consciously or unconsciously for the communist movement and I know of no rational man in the United States who holds that view. There are matters on which we differ as the Prime Minister said in ‘Meet the press’ on Sunday, that geography affects a good deal of the policy as well as internal conditions, traditions, culture and the past, all these affect foreign policy. So there are areas where we differ. But I do not know any figure in the world, as I have said on other occasions, who is more committed to individual liberty than Mr. Nehru.

“I think the people of India are committed to maintaining their national sovereignty and supporting liberty for the individual as a personal and religious tradition. We are going to disagree, but I am sure it

25. *Foreign Affairs*, Vol 30 No. I (Oct. 1951) p. 85.

is possible for us to disagree in the framework of not charging each other with bad faith.”²⁶

This Presidential statement demonstrates a policy shift towards India under the present administration. One senses now a growing realization in America of the role of India and other Asian countries in world affairs. Mr. George McGhee, Assistant Secretary of State for Near East, South Asian and African Affairs, when discussing America's relations with the countries of South Asia in the early fifties, affirmed that as a nation, America paid too little attention to the problems of that vast area. “As a people,” he said, “we are so concerned with the crisis in Europe and the Far East that we tend to overlook the significance of South Asia as a region with nearly half a billion inhabitants bordered on the north by Soviet Russia, Communist China and Communist-invaded Tibet.”²⁷

Thus the concept that “those who are not with us are against us” is no longer considered sound policy. There is now a greater appreciation of the position of those countries who do not align themselves with one bloc or another. The military might of the West may defeat the Communist States in war, but communism cannot be conquered on the battlefield; this must be accomplished in the minds of the people. It is, therefore, important to understand the Eastern mind, to know how communism influences the minds of the people, and how it has achieved success in certain areas. In the communist armory, inciting the poor and down-trodden to rebel against poverty and degradation is not the only weapon. Communism appeals strongly to the xenophobia and other prejudices of the educated middle classes, which constitute a much stronger moving force than economic calculations. Communism in the East derives its strength more from the educated middle class than from the masses. The main passion with the educated middle classes in India and elsewhere in the East is anti-imperialism. Besides,

26. *The Hindustan Times*, November 10, 1961.

27. *Ibid.*, June 2, 1951.

a considerable section of this class is also moved by the idealism of social justice in the sense of economic equality. These factors create an atmosphere of sympathy for communism. The western nations are capitalist powers, and communist propaganda says that imperialism is the highest and most brutal form of capitalism. The Western powers have dominated the East and exploited it for centuries, and long to recover once again their lost position of dominance. Have not France and England, by the invasion of the Suez Canal, attempted to reverse the wheel of history? Have not the Western powers condemned the action of India in Goa to free a portion of her territory from the colonial rule of Portugal? As a communist power, Russia is the enemy of the capitalist West and the colonial powers, and is therefore a friend of the people of Asia and Africa. She has demonstrated her anti-imperialistic sentiments by condemning the actions of England and France in the Suez Affair and by upholding India's action in Goa.

It may appear strange that the leadership of the communist movement in India, as almost everywhere in Asia, which should, according to Marxism come from the proletariat, is as a matter of fact manned by the educated middle and upper-middle classes. It is not the ideal of social justice or the fulfilment of their passion for anti-imperialism as a promise for dictatorial power that attracts ambitious young men to communism, young men who would otherwise lead a life of misery and frustration. The lust for power, an irresistible temptation, finds sublimation in the passion of anti-imperialism and nebulous social idealism. Unlike in the U.S.A., moral resistance to communism is bound to be weak in India, as there are no democratic traditions as such to defend. The Eastern mind is, as a matter of fact, still largely mediaeval and therefore authoritarian and is easily attracted by the idea of dictatorship. This explains to some extent the change-over to military regimes in some of the Asian countries. By playing upon the strong sentiment of anti-imperialism and reinforcing it with the lofty ideal of social justice, the communists not only get a sympathetic ear from the educated middle class, but also infiltrate into the nationalist movements. The toiling masses

are easily deluded by the prospect of a better standard of living. This approach fits in well with the communist thesis, for did not Lenin say that in the East nationalism should be regarded as an ally of communism? Communism, therefore, plays the role of nationalism. As a matter of fact, communism in the East is nationalism painted red.

Democracy has not taken deep roots in Indian soil. It is only fifteen years old and needs to be protected and nourished. Therefore, as mentioned above, moral resistance to communism in this country at this stage of her history, cannot be strong. In the United States and other Western countries, the determination to defend the modern civilized values—liberty, justice, morality, etc.—by a majority of the democratic peoples, gives strength for resistance to communism. Communism cannot play upon the emotions of the people by the sentiment of anti-imperialism, social justice and the standard of living of the people.

In conclusion, it may be said that for the U.S.A. the stakes are high in India. If democracy succeeds in this country, and there is no doubt that it will for it has already taken root, hundreds of millions of people in Asia will turn towards this experiment in democracy with fresh and renewed faith in it as the only means to a better life for themselves and their children. They will see in democracy in India not only freedom to vote and follow the religion of their choice, but a means to follow and practise the self-evident truth embodied in the American Declaration of Independence, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by the Creator with certain inalienable rights and that among these are the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. If democracy fails in India, it might mean a total defeat for democracy in the East and the people of Asia might turn to China for answers to their problems. Success of democracy in Asia depends to a considerable extent on the success of democracy in India.

A democratic Asia is an essential security to the United States and the West, and India holds the key position in Asia.

Bibliography

Newspapers

American

Atlanta Constitution.
Baltimore Sun.
Chicago Tribune.
Christian Science Monitor.
Cleveland Plain Dealer.
Daily Worker (Chicago).
Kansas City Star.
Los Angeles Times.
New York Herald.
New York Herald Tribune.
New York Tribune.
New York Times.
Philadelphia Inquirer.
Richmond Times-Dispatch.
St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat.
Springfield Republican.

British

Daily Herald, London.
Daily Mail, London.
Daily Telegraph, London.

London Times.
Manchester Guardian.
Morning Post, London.
News Chronicle, London.

Periodicals

American

Asia.
Catholic World.
Current Opinion.
Foreign Affairs.
Harper's Magazine.
Political Science Quarterly.
The American Review of Reviews.
The Annals.
The Bellman.
The Century Magazine.
The Christian Century.
The Commonweal.
The Independent.
The Independent and Weekly Review.
The Living Age.
The Literary Digest.
The Missionary Review of the World.
The Nation.
The New York Times Current History Magazine.
The New Republic.
The North American Review.
The Outlook and Independent.
The Review of Reviews.
The Saturday Evening Post.
The Weekly Review.
The World Outlook.
The World Tomorrow.

The World's Work.
Time.

British

The Contemporary Review (London).
The Edinburgh Review.
The Fortnightly Review (London).
The Nineteenth Century and After (London).

Articles

- Barker, Ellis. "Giving India Self-Government," *The New York Times Current History Magazine*, XIV (May, 1921).
Buck, Philo M. "The Ferment in India," *The Independent and Weekly Review*, CIX (November 11, 1922).
Chirol, Sir Valentine. "Acclimatized Democracy in India," *Asia*, XVIII (October, 1918).
——. "Constitutional Reforms in India," *The Quarterly Review* (London), CCXXX (October, 1918).
——. "India in Travail," *The Edinburgh Review*, CCXXVIII (July, 1918).
Dennett, Tyler. "What Does India Want?" *Asia*, XVIII (April, 1918).
Egan, Eleanor Franklin. "All is Confusion," *The Saturday Evening Post*, CXCVI (October 6, 1923).
——. "British Conservatism in India," *The Saturday Evening Post*, CXCVI (September 15, 1923).
Edwing, J. C. "Germany and India," *Asia*, XVIII (September, 1918).
Emerson, Gertrude. "Non-Violent Non-Cooperation in India," *Asia*, XXII (August, 1922).
Fraser, Sir Andrew. "Future of India," *The Nineteenth Century and After*, LXXXIII (February, 1918).
Gregg, Richard B. "The Empire Dies Hard," *The Nation*, CXXXI (July 9, 1930).
Hodge, J. Z. "The United States of India," *The North American Review*, CCXIV (October, 1921).

- Houghton, Bernard. "The Federation of India," *Political Science Quarterly*, XXXIV (June, 1919).
- . "Reforms in India," *Political Science Quarterly*, XXXV (December, 1920).
- Hyndman, H.M. "Unrest in India," *The Nation*, CX (June 19, 1920).
- . "Unrest in India and a Remedy," *Asia*, XIX (July, 1919).
- Joachim, Maurice. "America's Attitude Towards India," *The New York Times Current History Magazine*, XVI (September, 1922).
- . "India Turns Away From Gandhi," *The New York Times Current History Magazine*, XVII (December, 1922).
- . "What is Wrong with India," *The New York Times Current History Magazine*, XVI (July, 1922).
- Johnston, Charles. "Democracy in India," *Asia*, XVII (December, 1917).
- . "Fuller Liberty for India," *The North American Review*, CCIX (June, 1919).
- Lee, Ernest D. "The Case for the Rowlatt Act," *The Fortnightly Review*, CVI (August, 1919).
- Normanton, Helena. "White Washing British Rule in India," *The Nation*, CX (June 19, 1920).
- O'Dwyer, Sir Michael F. "Anarchy in India," *The Fortnightly Review*, DCL (February, 1921).
- Palmer, Norman D. "Ups and Downs in Indo-American Relations," *The Annals* (Philadelphia) 204 (July 1954).
- Pearson, W.W. "Gandhi—An Indian Saint," *The New Republic*, XXVII (July 27, 1921).
- Ratcliffe, S.K. "A Communication, England and India," *The New Republic*, XVI (August 17, 1918).
- Roberts, Charles, M.P. "Indian Reforms," *The Contemporary Review* (London), CXIV (September, 1918).
- Roberts, W.H. "A Review of Gandhi's Movement in India," *Political Science Quarterly*, XXXVIII (June, 1923).
- Rolland, Romain. "Mahatma Gandhi," *The Century Magazine*, CVII (December, 1923).

- . "Mahatma Gandhi," *The Century Magazine*, CVII (January 30, 1924).
- Roy, Evelyn. "Gandhi, Revolutionary Mystic," *The Living Age*, CCCXIX (October 20, 1923).
- Schuyler, Robert L. "Constitutional Reconstruction of India," *The Nation*, CVII (November, 1918).
- Sexton, Bernard. "Gandhi's Weaponless Revolt in India," *The New York Times Current History Magazine*, XV (February, 1922).
- Shasnain, Brian P.O. "Hind Swaraj," *The Catholic World*, CXV (July, 1922).
- Sheean, Vincent. "Moral Legacy of Considerable Persuasiveness," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 30 No. 1 (Oct. 1951).
- Stoddard, Lothrop. "The Problem of India," *The Century Magazine*, CI (February, 1921).
- Stephen, Sir Harry L. "Responsible Government in India," *The Nineteenth Century and After*, LXXXIV (November, 1918).
- Sydenham, Rt. Hon. Lord. "India and Mr. Charles Roberts, M.P.," *The Contemporary Review* (London), LXXXIV (November, 1918).
- Warner, James W. "The Problem of India," *Harper's Magazine*, CXLVII (October, 1923).
- Wilson, W.W. "The Unrest in India," *The World's Work*, XLIII (March, 1922).
- Zimana, Savel. "India Rejects Simon Report," *The New Republic*, LXIII (July 9, 1930).

Public Documents

India in 1919-39, A statement prepared for presentation to Parliament in accordance with the requirements of the 26th Section of the Government of India Act, in twenty-one volumes. Calcutta: Government of India Central Publication Branch.

Books

- Andrews, C.F., and Mukerji, Girja. *The Rise and Growth of the Congress*. London : George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1938.
- Basu, B.D. *India Under the British Crown*. Calcutta : The Prabasi Press, 1933.
- Collier, Price. *The West in the East from an American Point of View*. New York : Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911.
- Cordell Hull. *Memoires* Vol. II, London : Hodder Stoughton, 1948.
- Dutt, R. Palm. *India Today*. London : Victor Collancz Ltd., 1940.
- Eisenhower, Dwight D. *Crusade in Europe*, New York, Doubleday, 1948.
- Gandhi, M.K. *Challenge to Christianity*. London : George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1939.
- . *Freedom's Battle*. Madras : Ganesh & Co., 1922.
- . *Indian Home Rule*. Madras : Ganesh & Co., 1919.
- . *Speeches and Writings*. Madras : G.A. Natesan & Company, 1933.
- . *Young India, 1919-1922*. New York : B.W. Huelisch Inc., 1923.
- Keith, A.B. *A Constitutional History of India, 1600-1935*. London : Methuen & Co., 1936.
- MacDonald, Ramsay. *The Government of India*. London : The Swarthmore Press Ltd., 1919.
- Mahatma Gandhi—His own Story*. Edited by C.F. Andrews. New York : MacMillan Co., 1930.
- Mukerji, P. *The Indian Constitution*. Part II. Calcutta : Thacker Spink & Co., 1920.
- Nehru, Jawaharlal. *An Autobiography*. London : John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1939.
- . *The Discovery of India*. New York : The John Day Company, 1945.
- . *Toward Freedom*. New York : The John Day Company, 1942.

- Panikkar, K.M. *An Introduction to the Study of Relations of Indian States with the Government of India*. London : M. Hopkinson & Co. Ltd., 1927.
- Rosinger, Lawrance K. *India and U.S.* The MacMillan Co., N.Y., 1956.
- Sherwood, Robert E. *The White House Papers of Harry L. Hopkins*. London, Eyre Spottiswoode, 1949.
- Singh, G.N. *Landmarks in Indian Constitutional and National Development*. Benares City : The Indian Bookshop, 1933.
- Sinha, Sir S.P. *Future of India*. London : J. Truscott & Sons, 1916.
- Sitaramayya, Pattabhi. *History of the Indian National Congress*. Bombay : Padma Publications, 1946.
- Steevens, C.W. *In India*. Edinburgh and London : William Blackwood & Sons, 1899.
- Sunderland, Dr. J.J. *India in Bondage*. New York : Lewis Copeland & Co., 1930.
- . *The Truth About India*. New York : Lewis Copeland & Co., 1930.
- Valera, E. de. *India and Ireland*. New York : Friends of Freedom for India, 1920.
- Ward, F. de W. *India and the Hindoos*. New York : Baker & Scribner, 1850.

Index

-
- Act of 1919—46, 184, 186, 205
 - Act of 1935—352, 368
 - Ahimsa—150, 152, 167
 - Ali, Mohamad—168
 - Ali, Shaukat—168
 - Allies, war aims—13, 42, 59, 66, 99, 113
 - All-India Congress Committee—93, 94, 128, 139, 351
 - Ambedkar, Dr.—338
 - Amritsar massacre—65, 94, 275, 358
 - Andrews, C F.—312
 - Anglo-Japanese alliance—123
 - Arnold, Sir Edwin—153
 - Atlantic Charter—372
 - Attlee, Clement—374
 - Badley, Father Brenton T.—52, 53
 - Baldwin—210, 330
 - Bardoli—138, 139
 - Barker, J. Ellis—171, 172, 188
 - Besant, Mrs. Annie—36, 153
 - Birkenhead, Lord—210
 - Blaine, John J.—364
 - Blavatsky, Madame—153
 - Boer War—156, 157, 282
 - Brailsford, H. N.—288, 333
 - British Parliament—132, 290, 374
 - Buck, Philo, M.—193
 - Butler, Nicholas Murray—237
 - Cabinet Delegation—375
 - Caste system—52, 106, 162, 173, 187
 - Chamberlain, Sir Austin—330
 - Chelmsford, Lord—19, 44, 82, 114
 - Chirol, Sir Valentine—27, 28, 38, 60, 117
 - Chouri-Chawra—138, 139, 196, 198
 - Church II, Winston—humiliating to negotiate with 'half naked fanatic' 324 ; 325, 369 ; India's cooperation essential, 370 ; 372, Atlantic Charter not applicable to Empire, 373 ; not to preside at the liquidation of His Majesty's Empire 376
 - Civil Disobedience Movement—95; Gandhi's intention to start C.D.M. 138 ; Gandhi gives ultimatum to start C.D. movement if demands not conceded 273 ; 274, 276, 281, 290, 291, 303, 310, 331, 343 ; fast had an adverse effect on movement, 347; 348; Congress Working Committee resolves to suspend the movement, 351; 352, 353, 359, 362, 365
 - Collier, Price—6, 56
 - Communism—379, 382, 383, 384; its appeal to Eastern mind, 383; 387, 388
 - Connaught, Duke of—126, 130
 - Conservatives—100, 107, 149, 274, 330
 - Constituent Assembly—352, 370, 374
 - Conhey, Meyor—79
 - Cripps Mission—373, 374
 - Cripps Proposals—370
 - Cripps, Sir Stafford—369, 370
 - Curzon, Lord—144, 146
 - Dailey, Charles—294
 - Dandi March—276, 277, 278
 - Das, C.R.—98, 139, 140, 199, 202, 204, 205, 206
 - Das, Dr. Taraknath—366
 - Dayal, Har—366
 - Dennett, Tyler—40, 47, 48, 51
 - Depressed Class—353
 - Derby, Lord—149

- Doctrine of Paramountcy—267
 Dominion Status—216, 224, 230, 231, 236, 237, 238, 248, 251, 253, 270, 271, 273, 274, 286, 298, 302, 360
 Dulles, John—303
 Dutt, Palm—213
 Dyarchy—101
 Dyer, Brigadier-General R.E.H.—
 Statement before Hunter Commission 17; 77, 80, 81, 83, 95, 105; honoured in England for saving the Empire 177
 East India Company—1
 Edwing, J.C.R.—31
 Egan, Eleanor Franklin—6, 104
 Eisenhower, Dwight D.—368
 Emerson—118, 170
 Emerson, Gertrude—181, 193
 Extremists—19, 58, 225
 Federal Council of Churches—363
 Forson, Neglev—288, 294
 Fraser, Sir Andrew—37, 38, 44
 Gaddar Party—22, 70
 Gandhi—assumption of leadership 7, 9, 10, 15; views on Montagu Chelmsford Report 19; 49, 50; entered politics to fight Rowlatt Act 61; 65, 71; takes pledge 73, 74, 86, 91, 92, 93, 95, 100; in favour of working Reform 113; decision to start Khilfat movement 114; 115, 117, 118, 121, 126, 127; Swaraj within a year 128; 129, 130; asks people to boycott Prince of Wales' visit 131; 132; considers rioting a personal defeat, 134-135; 136, 137, 138; arrest 139, 142, 145, 148, 149, 151, 152; life sketch 153-157; 159, 160, 162; views on machinery 164; 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178; methods surprising to outside world 179; 184, 185, 186, 188, 189, 190, 192, 193, 194, 196, 197; arrest 199, 201; seriously ill in prison 202; 203, 206, 222, 228, 236, 238, 239, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 247, 251, 252, 258, 259, 262, 264, 269, 270; launches Civil Disobedience Movement 272, 273, 274; Dandi March 276; 278, 279; arrested 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287; unconventional rebel 291; 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 301, 303, 305, 306, 307, 311, 312, 321, 323, 324, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331; reached England for R.T.C. 332; 333; first address at R.T.C. 334, 335, 337, 339, 340; returns to India 342; arrested 344; decision to fast unto death 345; broke fast 346; 347; began another fast for purification 347; released from jail 348; 349; arrested, started fast and released 349; 350, 351, 354, 355, 357, 358, 359, 361, 362, 363, 364, 366, 370
 Gandhi-Irwin Negotiations—321, 323
 Gandhi-Irwin Pact—323, 326, 329
 Gandhi-Irwin talks—322, 326
 Garvin, J.L.—145, 146
 George, Lloyd—48, 114, 115, 140, 141, 144, 145, 147
 Ghose, Shilendra—366
 Goa—383-387
 Gregg, Richard B.—214
 Harijan—352
 Hayward, H.M.—40
 Hodge, J.Z.—183
 Holmes, Dr. John Haynes—363
 Home Rule—20, 31, 36, 47, 49, 50, 51, 52, 54, 55, 261
 Hopkins—370
 Houghton, Bernard—46, 66, 80, 95, 107, 148, 178
 House of Commons—18, 90, 94, 111, 146, 330, 357, 373
 House of Lords—100
 Hull, Cordell—372
 Hunter Commission—65, 75, 76, 81, 84, 94, 96, 97, 99, 116
 Hunter, Lord—79
 Hume, Allan Octavian—8
 Hyndman, H.M.—81, 91, 108
 Indian Federation—256
 Indian Independence Act—376
 Indian National Congress—inception of 8; cooperated with British during World War I 12; 49, 94, 98, 114, 117, 148, 206, 207; boycotts Simon Commission 208; Lahore session 228; 238, 247, 250, 260, 291, 328; Gandhi sole delegate of 331; 338, 353, 354, 359, 367, 368; accepts partition 375
 Indian revolutionary—22
 Irwin, Lord—245, 269; reiterates the declaration of Montagu 269; 270, 273, 274, 293; interview with Gandhi 321, 322, 323, 324, 326, 327, 328, 329

- Jallianwala Bagh—75
- Jayakar, M.R.—238, 240
- Jains—147
- Jinnah, M. Ali—138, 368
- Joachim, Maurice—170, 171, 173, 175, 189, 190, 191
- Johnson, Colonel—78
- Johnson, Colonel Louis—373
- Johnston, Charles—29, 39, 40, 56, 109
- Joint Parliamentary Committee—93
- Juhu talks—202
- Kashmir problem—383
- Keith, A.B.—268
- Kennedy, President—385
- Khan, Aga—338
- Khilafat—61, 99, 100; question of, 113-114, 115, 140, 143, 145, 148, 203
- Kitchlew, Dr.—74
- Kuhn, Ferdinand, Jr.—334
- Labour Government—275, 283, 374, 376
- Labour Party—35, 210, 251
- Lee, Earnest B.—66
- Lenin—168
- Liberals—271, 274, 330
- Lincoln, Abraham—48, 101
- Lucknow Pact of—1916—20
- Lunn, Sir Henry—309
- Malaviya, Pandit Madan Mohan—98, 138
- MacDonald, Ramsay—16, 24, 210, 225, 240; warning to Indian delegates against vain hope—252, 262, 265, 283, 308, 328, 341, 345, 357, 363, 364
- Martial Law—77, 78, 82
- McGhee, George—380, 385
- McGowen, George—70
- Miller, Webb—287, 294
- Minto, Lord—20
- Minto-Morley Reforms—23
- Missionaries—2, 3, 5, 51, 52, 55, 56, 190
- Moderates—19, 34, 58, 61, 240, 244, 274, 340
- Monroe Doctrine—3
- Monroe, President—102
- Montagu, E.S.—declaration of August 20, 1917, 18, 19, 20, 32, 33, 44, 67, 82, 94, 100, 111; publication of telegrams, 144, 145, 147, 149
- Montagu-Chelmsford Report—reception in India 19, 24, 42, 43, 61, 93, 107
- Montagu-Chelmsford proposals—31
- Montagu-Chelmsford scheme—56, 222
- Moplahs—118, 119, 121, 124, 198
- Moplah Outrage Act—118
- Moplah Rebellion—118, 119, 120, 122, 123, 124, 197
- Morley, Lord—23
- Mountbatten, Lord Louis—376
- Muslim League—Cooperation with Congress 17-18; 61; extends cooperation to the British 367; 374; differences with Congress on Cripps proposal 375
- Mutiny—83, 84, 152
- Naidu, Mrs. Sarojini—366
- Nationalists—60, 61, 216, 218, 247, 249, 263; attacks on unarmed 295; 322, 335; had no illusion about R.T.C. 336, 340, 342, 343, 345, 359, 361
- Nehru, Jawaharlal—9, 17, 30, 48; views on Christian missionaries 55; 58, 116, 165, 199, 203; suffered physical injuries in lathi charge by police 208; describes cavalry charge on crowd 209; 228, 240, 271, 337, 342, 344; mentioned possible successor to Gandhi 353; 354, 377, 379; views on non-alignment 382, on military aid to Pakistan 383; 384
- Nehru, Motilal—98, 139, 140, 199, 202, 204, 274
- Non-alignment—381, 382, 384
- Non-cooperation Movement,—99; Gandhi launches the movement 115; 116, 126, 127, 160, 161, 172, 176, 180, 182, 184, 186, 187, 189, 194, 196; brought no result 199, 201, 204, 206, 275, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361
- Non-violence—134, 326, 357
- Normanton, Helena—81, 96
- Nottingham Conference—35
- O'Dwyer, Sir Michael—89, 95, 145, 152
- Pakistan—376, 383, 384
- Palmer, Norman D.—378
- Panikkar, K.M.—266
- Parker, Sir Gilbert—312
- Passive Resistance—158, 176, 324, 325
- Passive Resistance Movement—86, 89, 92, 93, 151, 283

- Patel, Vallabhbhai—139
 Pearson, W.W.—161, 170
 Pederson, The Reverend M.A.—50
 Peking Government—384
 Phillips, Williams—373, 374
 Poona Pact—346
 Portuguese—I, 377
 Price, Clair—169
 Princes, Indian—49, 50 ; position in proposed federal government 234, 244, 246, 247, 253, 254, 255, 266; known for their loyalty to Britain 267 ; 268, 331, 332, 333, 338, 369
 Prince of Wales—129, 132, 133, 136, 137, 196, 198, 201
 Punjab Massacre—127, 186
 Quit India Movement—371
 Rai, Lajpat—208, 366
 Rankin, Justice—76
 Ratcliffe, S.K.—11
 Reading, Lord—127, 140, 141, 142, 144, 146, 149, 196
 Reforms of 1919—10, 11
 Reforms of 1919—100, 106, 107, 109, 110, 112, 113, 115, 258, 264
 Roberts, Charles—41
 Roberts, W.H.—169, 191
 Rogers, Will—287
 Rolland, Romain—155, 157, 162, 180
 Roosevelt, President—372, 373
 Rosinger, Lawrance K.—374
 Round Table Conference—222; 239, 238 ; drastic effect without Gandhi's participation, 239 ; 241, 242 ; inaugurated by King George V 245 ; 249, 250, 251 ; plenary session ends 252 ; 257, 258, 259, 261, 263, 264 ; came too late to accomplish its purpose 265 ; 270, 271, 311, 321, 325, 338, 342, 343, 352, 359
 Rowlatt Act—47, 66, 67 ; did not attract much attention in America 69 ; 74, 86, 90, 92, 95, 158
 Rowlatt Bill—61, 62 ; nature of 63, 64, 65, 66, 68, 71, 74, 86, 358
 Rowlatt Commission—61, 64
 Roy, Evelyn—194
 Russo-Japanese War—9
 Salazar—383
 Salt Law—276, 277
 Sankey, Lord—256, 257, 258
 Sapru, Sir Tej—238, 240
 Satyagraha—49, 71, 74, 118, 152, 154, 157 ; meaning of 158 159, 167, 178
 Satyapal, Dr.—74
 Schuyler, Robert L.—44, 45
 Selborne, Lord—93
 Sexton, Bernard—105, 170, 180, 182
 Shasnain, Fernard P.O.—168
 Sherwood, Robert E.—370
 Simon Commission—207 ; greeted with black flags 208, 209, 211, 212, 213, 215, 216, 218, 220, 224 ; boycott infused Indians with new spirit 269, 274, 285, 308, 311, 336, 359
 Simon Commission Report—first volume a survey document 213 ; 219, 221 ; favourably received in American press 222 ; 223, 225 ; second volume drew more comments from American press 227 ; 228, 230, 232, 234, 235, 238, 249, 259, 262, 288, 300, 345
 Simon, Sir John—209, 210, 211, 214, 218, 226
 Singh, St. Nihal—88
 Singh, G.N.—11
 Sinha, S.P.—12, 14
 Sheean Vincent, 380, 381, 385
 Sinn Fein—25
 Stevens, G.W.—55
 Stephen, Sir Harry—43
 Stoddard, Lothrop—182
 Suez Canal,—4, 387
 Sultan of Turkey—99
 Sunderland, Reverend J.J.—187
 Swaraj—106, 117, 118, 128, 134, 135, 160, 186, 189 ; aim changed to complete independence 271 ; 272, 289
 Sawaraj Party—140, 199, 204
 Sydenham, Rt. Hon. Lord—42
 Tagore, Rabindranath—70, 177, 181, 366
 Thompson, Edward—305, 306, 310
 Thoreau—118
 Tilak, Bal Gangadhar—12, 163
 Tolstoy—118, 169, 172, 279
 Tories—35, 340
 Treaty of Severes—121, 140, 141, 142, 143, 145, 147, 148, 186
 Trotsky, Leon—87
 Tucker, Booth—193
 Tyne, Claude Van—192
 Untouchables—253, 255, 338, 345
 Untouchability—268, 347, 349

- Ward, F. de W.—3
Warner, James W.—191
Washington, George—2, 1 1, 308
White Hall—49
White Paper—77. 351, 353
Williams, Rushbrook, L.F.—309, 311
Wilson, President—57
Wilson, P.W.—190
Winant, Ambassador—373
Working Committee—118, 138, 272., 321, 344, 367
Yervada Jail—238
Zetland, the Marquess of—302, 309, 310
Zimand, Saval—214
Zulu Rebellion—156

THE END

DATE DUE

N.L.S.—11/1

250,000/7/64—89847 W

The Author

Dr. Harnam Singh took his Master's degree in Political Science from Lucknow University in 1939, and then graduated in Law. Three years later the University of Lucknow awarded him a doctorate for his disseration on "*The Government and Administration of Jammu & Kashmir*"; a study that was highly commended by the late Sardar K.M. Panniker. Two years after his appointment as Lecturer in the Law Faculty of Delhi University in 1944, he was awarded the Watumul Foundation Fellowship for Research in Political Science in the U.S.A. During his three years stay in the United States, he took courses in Political Science at Columbia University, and was appointed Lecturer in International Relations at Georgetown University, Washington D.C. in 1948-1949. This University conferred a doctorate on him for his study of "*American Public Opinion and Indian Politics and Government*".

Soon after his return to Delhi University, he was appointed Reader in Political Science. In 1962, he was selected as Professor and Head of the Department of Political Science. Besides, these highly valuable studies in Public administration and international relations he is a regular contributor of articles to academic journals both in India and abroad.

954.08

SIN

A 4

CAN

The Nation

HQ

NATIONAL LIBRARY
N.Z. GOVERNMENT

THE INDIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT AND AMERICAN OPINION

This is the first full length study of American opinion in relation to British Rule in India, and more specifically to the Indian struggle for freedom, which gathering its momentum from the massacre at Amritsar in 1919 reached its logical conclusion in India's Independence in August 1947.

Dr. Harnam Singh has carefully analysed American opinion as reflected in a dozen important newspapers representing various political affiliations, along with articles appearing in leading journals both academic and non-academic, in reaction to the major political events and phases of Indian national movement, which he incidently traces with remarkable clarity and conciseness.

He has shown how American opinion, despite the fact that it had largely to rely on British sources of information, and despite increased British propaganda during the 30's, and despite Miss Mayo's damaging image of India, had from the very beginning been sympathetic to Indian aspiration : a sympathy which only grew in volume and concern during the last decades before India achieved Independence and has continued to do so ever since.

As the renowned Dr. Quincy Wright, Professor Emeritus of International law & Relations of Chicago University, observes in his introduction to this valuable study: "Dr. Harnam Singh traces the courses of American opinion, the issues that attracted comments, and the factors influencing the direction and intensity of opinion, the extent to which more abundant and accurate information was provided to the American public and the increasing realisation of American opinion of the importance of India and of its relations to the United States on the course of world politics. The study is a valuable contribution, not only to its specific subject, but also to the general understanding of public opinion, of its role in international politics of Indian-British relations during the Gandhian period, and of the background of recent Indian-American relations."
